1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

who in 1871 spoke in words almost identical to those one often hears today among the Santal; he says, "We only watch at Hindu festivals [we should only watch]; but as these festivals do not belong to us, Santal do not act rightly [in] offering to the *boṅga* (deities) of other races. On account of this our *boṅgas* are angry with us; it becomes like the state of having a wife and a co-wife, we are not making anybody satisfied."[18] Regarding specific borrowings from the Hindus, this same Santal says, "From the *Dekos* we have from time to time taken over many festivals; but among these there is only one festival that the whole village celebrates, viz., the Karam." He explains that on this occasion the offerings include certain flowers, sun-dried paddy, a type of grass, oil, and vermilion, i.e., the offerings are typically Hindu. They are presented to the Hindu deities Karmu and Dharmu.

> At other festivals taken from the *Dekos*, only the man who celebrates it, worships, and we go to look at it; we do not worship. At the Durga festival such people offer to Durga, at the Kali festival they offer to Kali, at the Monsa festival they offer to Monsa, at the Chata festival they offer to the Chata boṅga, at the Pata festival they offer to Mahadeb and at the Jatra festival they offer to Ransig, the Jatra boṅga.[19]

Though the Karam festival was certainly taken from the Hindus, it is not the only Hindu ceremony which the Santal communally celebrate. Various other ceremonies practiced in the nineteenth century and today are similar to Hindu cere-

[18] Bodding, 1942:158.
[19] Bodding *ibid.*:158.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

monies celebrated at approximately the same time, e.g., Sakrat (Hindi: Sankranti), and Dāsẽ (Hindi: Dasserah). However, these ceremonies are celebrated with a number of distinctive Santal practices, including animal sacrifice, worship at the Sacred Grove of Santal deities, etc.

The pattern of Santal-Hindu relations is thus one of Hindu domination and exploitation combined with considerable cultural influence. In the nineteenth century the Santal responded to increased Hindu pressure with a number of revolts which ended in defeat. These defeats must have indicated to the Santal that their position could not be improved by armed force nor by any other political means. Following these defeats acculturation and assimilation increased. At the same time there were attempts to curtail emulation of Hinduism and to combat assimilation, indicating the existence of counter-forces favoring solidarity. The advent of the market, population pressure, and increasing wealth differences among the Santal which developed during the latter part of the nineteenth century significantly affected the processes of acculturation and assimilation.

The Advent of the Market

The spread of the market, British Indian law and British protection led to a greater influx of Hindus into the hitherto sparsely populated Chotanagpur plateau. This Hindu influx plus the general growth of population, both Hindu and tribal, rapidly reduced the amount of unexploited land. The Santal record is full of examples of hiving off and forming new villages, new local lineages, and, no doubt, new sub-clans. The *bustee* of Daredih itself, which is now filled with industrial

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 What began as a shift resulting from migration to industrial
178 employment and consequent weakening of traditional social
184 bonds may have affected the norms by lessening the stigma of
583 low status traditionally associated with the *NB*.
584 If one may use the term "modernization" to designate those indigenous developments or borrowings which are patently adaptive or characteristic of industrial urban societies, the shift to unarranged marriages with attenuated ceremonial is an example of modernization. Thus, while industrial development and migration to industrial employment have in a number of ways weakened Santal solidarity, the modernization which it has encouraged has in some respects suggested cultural alternatives not characteristic of traditional Hindu society. Insofar as this has been true, modernization has contributed to the maintenance of distinctiveness and solidarity and thereby inhibited
[171] assimilation. Many aspects of modernization, however, are likely to be equally operative among Hindu and Santal, especially in the long run, so that the cultures are made more alike.*

The Decline of Ceremonies in Bustee *and City*

177 Even a casual observer might note that ceremonies in the
178 *bustee* as compared with those in the village are less well at-
184 tended and often attenuated. As for the city Santal, they prac-
• 796 tice no communal forms of worship like those traditionally performed at the "Sacred Grove" as long as they remain in the city; often they do not even perform ancestor worship in

[114] * Dr. Milton Singer called my attention to the significance of modernization with respect to my data on marriage and ceremonial and pointed out its significance in terms of acculturation and assimilation, though I am of course responsible for the form that his remarks have assumed above.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

their Company houses. The temptation to interpret these changes as manifestations of increased secularity on a folk-urban continuum is great. However, a close look at the data suggests that the decline of ceremonies is not so much a question of increased secularity as it is a question of situational factors involved in migration to industrial employment. These factors operate directly to inhibit ceremonial practice and participation and operate indirectly to the same end by contributing to lack of solidarity in the *bustee* and city. Since ceremony both reflects and reinforces solidarity, its decline is both a cause and an effect of declining solidarity.

In the course of field work, I observed and participated in a number of ceremonies in the village, Fanderkuta, and the *bustee*, Daredih. Information concerning ceremonial practices was also obtained by interviews with informants from a variety of villages and *bustees*. Because of a suspicion that my presence, particularly in Daredih, had significantly altered the usual practice, my field assistant observed and reported on one ceremony, *Baha*, after I had left India. His report indicates that my suspicions were well founded. The reasons for decreased participation in and attenuation of ceremonies in the *bustee* as compared with the village are readily apparent if one examines the *Baha* ceremony as practiced in the two communities. Similar reports could be given of any of the other communal ceremonies.

Baha is the great spring festival celebrated in March* and ranking second in importance among annual ceremonies.† The word *Baha* means flower and refers here to the flowers of the Sal tree (*sarjom*; *shorea robusta*) and of the tree known as

* Actually in the Hindu month of *Phalgun* (February–March).

† The most important is known as *Sohrae* and will be briefly discussed later.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

796 *Matkom* (Hindi: *Mahua*; *Bassia latifolia*) which are collected [824] and distributed as part of the ceremony.**

The manifest purpose of the *Baha* ceremony is to request the deities (*boṅga*) to prevent the occurrence of disease, a request which is made at every Santal ceremony and to provide good crops. The rites performed seem to express a general concern for the bounty of nature, respect for the village founder and his descendants, e.g., the headman and priest, and a reaffirmation of the ties of kinship, including an obligatory expression of joking behavior between "joking relatives" (*gonok' hoṛ*). The respect shown for the village founder and his descendants may, of course, be regarded as reflecting and reinforcing village solidarity.

796 783 787 The festival as practiced in the village lasts two days. On the first day the priest (*Naeke*) bathes to purify himself and immerses for ritual purity the implements to be used in the rites. Most of the men gather at his house and five among them become "possessed" (*rum*). Each is possessed by one of the [776] five major deities worshipped during *Baha*. One speaks and acts as Jaherera, the Goddess of the Sacred Grove; one as *Mõṛeko*, the Five; one as *Liṭa*; one as *Marak Buru*, Great Mountain; one as *Goram Boṅga*, Old Deity, who is the spirit [783] of Maṅjhi Haṛam, the village founder. In the possessed state the five mediums go to the Sacred Grove to see that acts of purification previously performed there by the priest, including washing the three stones representing the deities of the grove and plastering the ground with purifying cow dung, have been properly performed.

On the next day the priest, accompanied by the same five

** The former is used for wood in building and for fuel and the leaves for making plates; the latter is the source of an intoxicating drink known as *Pona*.

The Santal

On the next day the priest, accompanied by the same five
796 men who are again possessed and amidst almost the entire
782 village separated into lines of male and female dancers, pro-
787 ceeds to the Sacred Grove. The Goddess of the Sacred Grove carries a large wicker basket (*daura*) perhaps as a sign of the good harvest to come. The Five bring a bow and arrow signifying bountiful game, though hunting has ceased to be of economic significance.* *Lita* brings an axe, the instrument which the Santal associate most closely with the clearing of new land. *Maraṅ Buru*, the national deity of the Santal, and *Goram Boṅga*, the godly embodiment of the village founder, carry sticks, perhaps as signs of their power. The five deities dance around the three stones which lie within a small shed open on all sides. The priest then sprinkles water on the stones and smears each with vermilion. He then "greets" (*johar*) each of the deities. The Five shoot an arrow at a Sal tree and the other deities rush up and smell the arrow to determine omens (*sagun*), which indicate whether the flowers of the tree would make a satisfactory offering. The deities then present flowers to the priest, who places them around the three stones. He makes three circles with rice flour around the stones and within each circle (*khond*) sun-dried rice and vermilion are applied. A large chicken is then brought to one of the circles and made to eat some of the sun-dried rice; then its head is cut off by the priest. As the blood drips into the circle the priest says, "Greeting *Maraṅ Buru*, in the name of *Baha* I am offering to you so that headache and stomach ache may not come to us; we give you that we may remain in good health." The same rite is repeated with the other two stones but the names of the

* Perhaps "The Five" have some connection with "The Five People" (*Mõre Hor*) which, as explained, refers to the village council.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

796 782 (787) deities are not mentioned. After these rites the deities in the person of the five possessed ones eat the sun-dried rice that has been offered.

The priest then repairs to some open ground within the Sacred Grove which has been previously purified as described earlier; here he marks out with rice flour ten connected squares, in each of which he offers repeatedly to the five deities small or baby chickens donated by each family in the village. In prayer each of the deities is greeted and told that the offering is in the name of sowing. The priest says, "So many offerings are being made, are you not pleased?" The deities represented by the five possessed men then consume some of the sun-dried rice and the rest of the village men eat the remainder; the bodies of the chickens are also eaten by the villagers and the heads by the priest.

The final offering of the ceremony is conducted on the same day and in a similar manner but the offering is to the "boundary deities" (*sima boṅga*). The names of the surrounding villages belonging to the same Pargana are mentioned in the offering as the priest exclaims, "Whatever deities you may be, let no illness or smallpox come to us."

The priest then tenders his respect to the spirit of the founder of the village, "Old Man Headman," by moving three times about the permanent shed (*mañjhithan*) in which he dwells. The women then return to the Sacred Grove and receive flowers from the priest, who presents them with a greeting of respect like that made to an elder or a deity. Then, as the Santal say, "to show their respect for the priest," they all dance about him as he proceeds down the path of his section of the village; as he proceeds each woman washes his feet. The

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

796 practical jokes performed on each other by joking relatives
782 such as pouring water down one another's back terminate the priest's procession.

After these rites the males of each household offer rice beer to their patrilineal ancestors. With religious obligations completed, dancing, singing, mutual visiting, eating, and drinking prevail and may continue through the evening and morning, to the exhaustion of the anthropologist but apparently not of the Santal participants.*

184 In the *bustee* celebration of *Baha*, the rites involving the
796 five possessed men are eliminated; otherwise the rites performed are similar, the major difference being in the scale of participation. Since the rites of possession are eliminated, there is no occasion on the first day of the ceremony for all the villagers to gather at the priest's house; indeed, there are no rites to be performed on this day, so that the ceremony is condensed from two days to one. On the second day there is no great procession of dancing men and women accompanying the priest to the Sacred Grove; instead a few men and boys with no fanfare walk beside him to the grove. Those who go are almost all close patrilineal relatives of the priest for whom Daredih is a native village. Of the two non-relatives whom I observed accompanying the priest, one was the only immigrant worker who had bought farming land in Daredih; the other was one of the earliest immigrants who had for that reason become assistant headman (*jogmañjhi*) of the section (*tola*) of the *bustee* in which the immigrant workers live. Perhaps about half of the adult males of Daredih intermittently came and left during the performance of the rites. At this time one of the

* The rites reported here vary in minor detail from village to village but not in such a manner as to alter the comparison which is made here.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

184 priest's brothers remarked that "the working people come
• 796 only when it is time to eat." The priest also complained of this, as he had done at several other ceremonies. However, [123] there were many more present than is usual, for my camera and the prospect of having a photograph taken which might later be obtained from me was a potent lure to these people. My assistant reported almost no workers present at these same rites after I had left India. The remainder of the ceremonies are performed as in the village, except that there is no procession of dancing men and women to lead the priest back into the village.

184 The attenuation of the ceremony and the relative non-par-
771 ticipation of migrant industrial workers is not significantly the
776 result of secularization. In spite of many interviews and casual discussions about the supernatural I found little evidence of decreased belief in the deities or the efficacy of rites. Also, many of these men occasionally returned to their villages for various festivals, and when I saw such men in their native villages I found their participation as ardent and regular as that of any villager.

177 In my view the most important cause of this attenuation of,
178 and non-participation in, ceremonies is limited identification
184 with the *bustee*, and there is evidence that this is the result of
796 migration to industrial employment. The second most important cause of attenuation and non-participation is the time demands of industrial employment.

[621] Those who participate most regularly and fully have strong
[464] grounds for identifying with the *bustee*. Almost all are natives of Daredih. The two other regular and full participants include the only immigrant worker who has bought land in Daredih and a very early immigrant who has become assistant headman.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 The former, who had no land in his native village, frequently
178 told me that for him Daredih was his village; the latter, by
184 virtue of his position, of which he is extremely proud, is re-
• 796 quired to attend rites, and no doubt his status makes the *bustee*
621 and its deities more his own than would otherwise be the case. The others, who have neither agricultural land nor position in Daredih, feel that it is not their village, that the local gods are not quite their gods, that the priest is not quite their priest, and that the founder of the village is not the founder of their village. This lack of commitment is reflected in both the attenuation of and non-participation in the various ceremonies of *Baha*. The Santal themselves say, "Here all are workers so we don't worship so much," or simply, "Here we don't worship so much."

[769] This interpretation rather than secularization is supported by the observation that ancestor worship is generally practiced even by those who do not attend the community rites performed by the priest; in ancestor worship it is, of course, one's own ancestors who receive the offering. The failure to dance before the priest's house and the failure to provide him with a dancing procession to and from the Sacred Grove are indications that he is not quite their priest; the same explanation accounts for their frequent failure to contribute to the sacrifices on behalf of the *bustee*. Indeed, the Santal themselves regard all of these acts as signs of respect to the village leaders, and as already indicated, the priest often complains on this score.

Nor can all these acts, which both express and serve to weaken the solidarity of Daredih, be entirely due to the time
[793] demands of industrial employment. The priest is himself an industrial worker, as are many of his patrilineal relatives who live in Daredih, and they are regular participants. Also, the

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 number of immigrant workers present when it comes time to
178 eat the offerings that have been made, drink the rice beer which
184 has been offered, and join in secular dancing for pleasure is
• 796 invariably greater than those present during the performance
621 of village ceremonials.

It is not that the immigrant workers regard it as wrong to worship the deities of the *bustee*'s Sacred Grove or to offer respect to its priest and founder; on occasion and in varying degrees they will do both. Except for "Old Man Headman" and the boundary deities, the same beings are celebrated in their native villages. It is rather a question of having less attachment than of opposition. As these workers say when asked about non-participation, "It is all right because all is being done properly in my native village."

182 Typically, migration to industrial employment does not re-
423 sult in acquisition of agricultural land at the new place of
residence; both limited availability of land in such areas as
/ 464 well as alternative employment make this difficult. Lack of
621 agricultural land belonging to the *bustee* limits identification. Ownership of such land has the opposite effect; as the regular attendance at Daredih's communal ceremonies by immigrant workers who had purchased land there tends to show. Similarly, the Santal have a long history of migration, and Santal who move to a new village where they acquire land show none of the signs of lack of identification characteristic of immigrant workers in Daredih. Thus it is not simply migration which is responsible for diminished solidarity, but migration to industrial employment.

177 The *Baha* festival was, of course, not the only ceremonial
178 casualty of migration to industrial employment of which I saw
184 evidence at Daredih. At the great *Sohrae* festival, held in Oc-
796

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 tober when the harvest is in, the final fourth day's rites are
178 eliminated; these are primarily concerned with collecting and
184 stealing rice beer and food from all the houses. During this
• 796 festival a rite is performed in which the villagers' cows are made to walk over an area where some eggs have been placed. The owner of the cow which first breaks an egg is considered propitious, and he is required to repay the deities for his good fortune by providing the rice beer to be offered on the following year. At the ceremony in Daredih few were in attendance, and that few did not include the immigrant worker whose cow had previously broken the egg, so that another man had to provide the rice beer. Finally, there was a noisy dispute within the *bustee* because the immigrant workers assembled for dancing on the dancing ground (*akhra*) in their section rather than before the house of the headman, as they should have done according to tradition.

At the festival of Sakrat in mid-February, the third most elaborate ceremony, the custom of going house-to-house to collect rice beer is shortened from three days to one day; in addition, a rite in which arrows are shot at pole targets is not practiced. At a village not half a mile further away from the town and only a short distance from Daredih arrow-shooting is practiced; but in this village almost all are native villagers practicing agriculture though the headman and a few others are factory workers besides being farmers. This negative instance of attenuation and non-participation provides further proof of the critical significance of migration to industrial employment.

182 If limited identification with the *bustee* is primarily respon-
184 sible for the decline of ceremony, the time demands of indus-
796 trial employment have been an unwitting accomplice. The time

466 82
177

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

demands of factory employment are in certain critical ways different than those of agricultural labor. For example, TISCO works on three eight-hour shifts, while the hours of agricultural labor are typically identical for all. Furthermore, in a number of departments of a steel mill there are no occasions, barring a strike, when all work comes to a standstill. This industrial situation makes it impossible for all Santal workers of the community to be present for a ceremony during any fixed period. Some departments give a leave of absence to all their workers for major Hindu festivals, but Santal ceremonials do not always coincide in time with Hindu ones. Nor could such an adjustment, if desired, be easily made, since Santal villages have no fixed days for their ceremonies and each village chooses a day or several days within the appointed month during which the villagers will be free of agricultural labor.

There is a third factor to be taken account of, though it is so entwined with lack of identification that it may only be distinguished analytically. Since the immigrant workers seldom have agricultural land in the *bustee*, some of the rites performed at various ceremonies which concern agricultural abundance, such as *Baha*, are of diminished interest. To be sure, they probably have land in their native village contributing to their own and their relatives' income, but, as they remark, "It is all right not to participate here because it is all being done properly in my native village." This attitude is closely related to lack of identification since, as already indicated, the place where one has land is likely to be regarded as one's own village. Connected with this attitude is the immigrant worker's intention of eventually retiring to his native village to live off the land. He may even look forward to purchasing his land with his industrial earnings.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

369 There are a few observations concerning ceremonial practice
• 796 which apply to all the city Santal (excluding, of course, those
[622] who live in town *bustees*). We have seen that the city Santal
[778] are not even a community to the degree that the *bustee* Santal
[793] are; they do not, for the most part, live side-by-side, they have no headman or priest and they have no Sacred Grove in which to assemble for community worship. The practice of community worship is ruled out for lack of physical facilities, but as we have seen from our examination of the *bustee*, there is little reason to think that their presence would be sufficient to maintain ceremonial practice and participation at the level obtained in rural villages.

342 What is most striking about the city Santal is that they do
369 not practice ancestor worship in their Company houses. Their
769 explanation of this, with a little elaboration, appears to me to be an adequate one. They say, "Who knows whose houses these were before we got here—they are not our houses. That
[192] is why we do not worship here." It will be recalled that ancestor worship is performed behind a wall dividing off a portion of the main room of the house and known as "inside" (*bhitar*; Santali and Hindi = "inside"). The same word is used to refer to secret rites and deities of a family and of a local lineage, i.e., when a question touches on such things they will say you are asking an "inside" question. It will also be recalled that this "inside" portion of the house must be guarded against pollution by menstruating women. Since it is not permissible to erect such a wall within a company house, again physical facilities in the city render traditional practice difficult. But more than the particular difficulty of lack of a wall, there is a
[783] general question of pollution. Not only does the company house not provide a proper sanctuary for the "inside" rites of

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF SANTAL RETURNED AS HINDU
(Census of India 1931)*

	1901	1911	1921	1931
Orissa	44	46	43	48
Chota Nagpur Feudatory States (Seraikela, Kharswan)		0	18	48
Singhbhum	16	3	56	23

tion of villages which follow distinctively Hindu religious practices. I have heard of only one Santal village within the territory occupied by the southern Santal which has abandoned traditional forms of worship and become thoroughly Hinduized. In 1916 Roy reported the conversion to Hinduism of a number of Santal in a Hindu village in Orissa; they were served by an outcast Brahman priest.[1] I met only one Santal who had taken up Hindu religious practices, and he lived in the city of Jamshedpur. Nowhere that I went were Santal served by Brahmans, though in some areas Santal families are occasionally visited by members of the Potkar caste, who bring messages from the dead for a fee. The Santal also employ females of various low Hindu castes to deliver their children and sometimes patronize Hindu practitioners of traditional medicine (*Kubraj*; Hindi).

It is true that until recently the Santal in large numbers took part, in their own way, in various Hindu festivals. At many of the major Hindu festivals the Santal would assemble for mixed dancing, and some would become possessed and speak

* More recent census figures do not contain this information because "caste has been abolished" as a legal entity.

[1] Roy, 1916.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

in the name of the Hindu deities invoked. Although this activity has recently been somewhat curtailed for reasons soon to be discussed, it is still possible to observe Santal worshipping Jugganath at the Cart Festival (*Rath Jatra*) in Baripoda, the capital of Mayurbhanj. Many Santal, even in villages where there are few Hindus, may also be seen immersing the Hindu [184] Tusu goddess. In spite of these activities, in which most Santal have engaged, and even though all Santal ceremonies have some Hindu elements, almost all southern Santal have remained firmly attached to their own deities, and there have been no mass conversions.

The Indian government's figures on Hindu religious identification are largely an artifice of census methods, and since at least the 1920's, often of coercion as well. Culshaw, for example, commments that:

> The prevailing Indian identification of race with religion has caused some confusion in their [the Santals'] minds, but the fact that about 50 per cent of Santal were returned in 1931 as Hindus and most of the remainder as followers of tribal religion indicated the heightened political consciousness of the enumerators more than any real division within the tribe.[2]

Many Santal reported to me that they were pressured by local Hindu authorities to register themselves as Hindus. Others claimed that ignorance played a major role in the returns; the census-takers asked, "What is your religion?" (*Dhorom*; Oriya), and most Santal, it is said, did not understand this word. When it was explained they would reply "Santal religion," and the census-taker would then say, "That is your caste (*jāti*), not

[2] Culshaw 1949:15.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

115 then in line for promotion to assistant supervisor. His work record was excellent, including an award of Rs. 25 and special commendation for having suggested an improvement in the brick-making process. Fortunately for me, Mr. F. spoke adequate English in addition to excellent Hindi, Bengali, Oriya, and three Mundari languages—his own (Santal), Ho, and Mundari.

I was impressed with his intelligence and noticed that he seemed highly acculturated, though at that early stage of our relationship I could not point to specific Hindu practices which marked this acculturation; it was rather an impression based upon bearing and gesture. Later my impression of Mr. F.'s Hinduization was repeatedly confirmed. I learned that he had been sent to live with a Brahmin family as a small boy. I recall a discussion among Mr. F., five other Santal, and me in which the rites of Santal local lineages were discussed; Mr. F. alone insisted that the rites of some lineages, especially his own, were purer and higher than those of other lineages. The other Santal present argued in traditional Santal fashion that each thinks his own lineage best but that none is better than any other. The strongest confirmation of my impression is that it is shared by less acculturated Santal. One young man who had married a relative of Mr. F. refused to visit Mr. F., despite the urging of his wife, who had lived for some years in Mr. F.'s house and wished to visit. It was this young man who remarked that Mr. F. was so much like a *diku*, that "before him I feel like a black Santal."

668 But it was not Mr. F.'s acculturation which puzzled me. The
• 796 literature on acculturation of Indian tribals is replete with such
115 cases and we are not without some knowledge of the basis of this acculturation. It was rather the vehemence of his objection to Santal attendance and participation in the Durga Puja cere-

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

668
796
115

monies which I could not account for. He told me that the celebration was a "lure and a trap for tribals." When I asked him if other Santal felt similarly he described the manner in which word against attendance and participation was being spread throughout the area by Santal and other tribal headmen and men of influence. Surprisingly, he and his family attended the ceremonies and so did a number of other Santal from the city and surrounding countryside, including workers from the *bustees*. The word, however, had been circulated among tribals that they should not attend and should under no conditions participate by performing group dances or becoming possessed, as was their custom. Some did refrain from attendance as urged, and no tribals performed group dances or became possessed.

Why should Mr. F., one of the most acculturated Santal, vehemently oppose tribal attendance and participation in the Hindu celebration? It seemed to me that the most acculturated would surely be most in favor of acculturation. I asked Mr. F. why he opposed attendance and participation. He said, "It is bad for Santal and other tribals to be present because they are mostly 'ignorant' people and on such occasions are taken advantage of by numerous Hindus who wheedle away their earnings." While this explanation justified his own attendance since he is not "ignorant," taken at face value it hardly seems to account for the organized opposition to tribal attendance and the particular emphasis against participation in the ceremonies. In addition Mr. F.'s fears that his fellow tribals would be gulled by the Hindus seemed inappropriate, since most of the tribals of the area who might attend were either workers in daily contact with Hindus or farmers who live near Jamshedpur, or villagers who run the risk of being swindled

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

668 weekly at various markets. Santal attendance at Durga Puja
•796 could hardly present Hindus with unprecedented opportunities
115 to take advantage of tribals. Nevertheless, as I shall show later, a less literal interpretation of Mr. F.'s remarks accounts rather well, at least in part, for his opposition.

668 An event a few days after the Durga Puja provides some
115 clues about Mr. F.'s opposition. He came to see me and to return a book on the Santal which he had borrowed. I asked what he thought of the book and he said, "It is very bad; it says that 'aboriginals' (*ādibāsī*; Hindi) only progress when in the presence of Hindus. For example, it says that we have borrowed 'vermilion' from the Hindus when we think it is they who have borrowed it from us." I asked him to show me those portions of the book to which he took exception, and he pointed to the section dealing with acculturation. He was somewhat mistaken in attributing to the author an attitude favoring acculturation; both his limited command of English and his knowledge of the predominant Hindu position regarding acculturation probably influenced his interpretation. Mr. F. was not willing to let the matter rest with the mere comment that the book was bad, and he caused me some alarm by proposing to read the portions of the book he opposed before the local branch of the tribal Jharkhand political party. His objective was to obtain a declaration of protest against the book to be forwarded to the Central Government. It is not now important that I managed to dissuade him from such action. But that a sophisticated Santal could contemplate such action suggests institutionalized opposition to acculturation. It further suggests a connection between this opposition and political objectives. It was only later that I learned that the Jharkhand party had spearheaded the drive to prevent tribal attendance and partici-

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

668 539 771 ligion. . . . Some literate people also are leading us in a bad direction. In eating and clothing we often follow the *diku* way; we are departing from the way of our own society.

177 178 796 The final cultural manifestation to be discussed brings us back to the Durga Puja anecdote with which this chapter began. In the spirit of solidarity every effort is being made to prevent attendance at and participation in Hindu ceremonies. One of the dangers inherent in attendance and participation is the emulation of Hindu ways and the development of Hindu identification. The second danger stems from the manner of Santal participation, i.e., the Santal tendency to engage in mixed dancing, to become drunk, and in general to publicly display those forms of "pleasure" which are the attributes of low rank. The third danger bears a resemblance to the objection voiced by the city Santal, Mr. F., that the Santal are cheated by the clever *dikus*. No doubt there is some cheating, but what is really objectionable is that on such occasions considerable money is spent on "pleasure" and is thus not available for the serious business of rank improvement.

184 668 796 A more positive attempt to increase solidarity is the recent effort to get all Santal villages to celebrate their festivals simultaneously and to set the dates for such occasions so that they will not coincide with Hindu ceremonies. This effort has had a limited success in Mayurbhanj but has not been adopted generally because (1) the traditionally important visiting and reciprocity made possible by non-simultaneous ceremonies would have to be sacrificed, and (2) industrial workers now attending those of their own festivals which are held at the same time as Hindu ones on "free time" (permissible leave periods during which they are paid) would have to take leave without pay or forego all ceremonies. In principle, however,

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

184 all agree that the recent proposal for simultaneity is one that
668 ought to be implemented.

• 796 Mr. F., the acculturated city Santal raised by a Brahman family, was essentially opposed to attendance at the Durga Puja
668 festival in Jamshedpur because of its danger to solidarity. His
796 own acculturation and assimilationist tendencies were acquired
[115] before the opening of the political rank path. Today, despite some anxiety regarding the practice of certain distinctive practices, he is among the leaders of the movement for social solidarity and cultural separatism. No wonder that he should have complained, even though in error, about the passage in the Santal ethnography which seemed to him to say that "Santal only improve when in contact with Hindus."

668 The new solidarity fostered by political democracy is a new solidarity and not simply a return to traditional solidarity, at least for the immigrant industrial workers. It is they who are in the forefront of the movement, and there is no doubt that they are now bound to their people much more tightly than heretofore. But this does not make a *bustee* into a native village; it does not make marriage into a bond between kinship groups and villages; it does not eliminate the separate income and individual mobility of factory employment. In short, it does not recreate the traditional social basis for traditional solidarity. Instead it creates a new direct bond with all the Santal and to a somewhat lesser degree with all other tribals of the area. This new bond rests ultimately on the somewhat tenuous opportunity for the Santal and other tribals to function as a successful interest group. Given enough time, perhaps the new "likenesses" will be of enough force to hold the Santal and other tribals together in spite of change in the avenues of mobility.

[P. 120 is blank]

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

f. Hunting.

224 The great joy of us men is the hunt. From olden times we have continually been hunting, and in however great a danger we may fall, still we do not give up hunting. And if a person will not go, we despise such people and call them women. Our ancestors have fought tigers and bears with great courage; sometimes the tigers and bears have gained the upper hand, and sometimes the men, and so it is going on until the present day.

178 203 224 793 • 796 In former times they used to announce the hunt by sending a branch from village to village, by stages; but since our stay in Sikhar we notify the day at the Pata (the hook-swinging festival)*. As there is a village priest and a priest of the outskirts in the village, there is similarly a dihri (hunt-priest) for the hunt. There is one hunt-priest for every single country. He carries the branch round at the Pata; the people of the country then ask him: In connexion with what is your branch, Sir? He then tells them the name of the forest: In such and such a forest, on such and such a day, at such and such a place we shall meet. He also tells them where they will spend the night. When we come home, we men in the village tell each other the news, saying: At such and such a date they are

224 to hunt through such and such a forest or over such and such a hill. The men of the village then get their different hunting implements together, they string their bows, fix the iron arrow-heads and the blunt arrow-heads in the arrows, they grind the iron arrow-heads and make them sharp-pointed, they grind their battle-axes sharp and give them a handle; they put the spear-heads on the shafts, and the swords they polish bright. They tell the women to prepare dough-balls of Mahua for food, and they make them pound rice to have to take along with them. The village headman has to give five half-seers of rice and one small bundle of Mahua as hunt-bounty. This the hunting men eat, or if some

[782] poor men have nothing, they let them have a sufficiency of this. The village priest sacrifices five fowls for the sake of the hunt.

[534] When the fixed day is reached, a couple of men go at cock-crow in advance out to an open plain to bring the whole male village population together there; they also take kettle-drums and flutes and horns along with them; and until the village men have all come out, they beat the kettle-drums rat-a-tat, blow the flute harmoniously, and blow the horns tootingly, and they sing any amount of forest songs sweetly. When they have all assembled, they shout with one voice together; thereupon they go to the place where they are to meet. Here they eat their noon meal. One after the other the people of the country come and assemble there; the hunt-priest has been there from cock-crow.

224 787 Until the people of the country arrive, the hunt-priest makes a divination about good or bad happenings. If he gets anything bad in any direction, he calls the country people

* The Pata should be held on the last day of Cat, about the 15th of April; among the people living in the Santal Parganas it may be held any day during Baisak (middle of April to middle of May). The dihri has a sal-branch with as many leaves as there are days remaining before the hunt is to take place.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

The Jom sim bonga was not from the beginning; at the Jom sim festival they were offering only to the Sun bonga. They had, it is told, had a sacrifice to their Abge. When they had eaten and were going home, they forgot a battle-axe and left it there. When they remembered this on their way, one of them ran back to fetch it. To this man the Jom sim bonga revealed himself; he was picking up and eating what was lying scattered there. While he was eating the bonga was talking to himself: Oh, now I have felt pleased for the first time. Then seeing the man, he disappeared. The man brought the battle-axe, but he did not tell them of the bonga that had revealed himself. After this they got a good deal of fever, so that they were near dying. Then they had some divination made for them. The ojhas told them: Some bonga or other is revealing himself to you. Then the man who had fetched the battle-axe remembered what had happened to him, saying: Really I saw him when I was fetching the forgotten battle-axe. I heard him say: Now I have felt pleased for the first time. Therefore they called this bonga Ahaṅ. The ojhas said to them: This bonga says: Offer to me at the Jom sim festival. From that time the Santals worship him. 776

c. Worship and festivals.

The Sowing fowl is the first offering of the year[2]. In the month of Asar (middle of June to middle of July) we eat the sowing fowls, in the name of sowing and scattering the seed. Every house has to give one fowl. The village priest offers these in the sacred grove. He offers one fowl to each, to Maraṅ buru, Jaher era, Mõṛko, Gosãe era, Pargana, and Maṅjhi haṛam. He offers one black fowl to the bonga of the surrounding boundary. The remaining fowls he offers to the bongas along the boundaries; and if there are fowls left, they kill them wringing their necks. They do not offer them in a lump, but each separately. They make an invocation, as follows: Be greeted then, Father my Ṭhakur, Jaher era (or Maraṅ buru, and so on), here then in the name of the Sowing fowl this is given to thee, handed to thee; we shall sow in one place, in twelve places may it shoot up in tufts, may they blow and bring, flood and bring rainy season rain, burning rain; into this village, this hamlet do ye not let suffering and sin, disease and illness, stomach-ache or headache enter, penetrate; with golden slings, with golden shoulder-yokes ye will carry it away on your shoulders, ye will carry it away with shoulder-yokes to another side, another boundary, Father my Ṭhakur. Widows, women of ill omen, a torn leaf, a folded leaf they will select for destruction, will doom; so then do not ye let them get good omens, favourable signs; then one day, half-a-day they will pry, stand on tiptoe, do not let any spell be thrown, any hurt be done, the calf-mothers, the goat-mothers may they wander about, walk about satisfactorily, the Sin forest, the Man forest, the half-grown dogs may ye press down, cover up, Lord, Father, my Ṭhakur. 796 782 796 782 539 [787]

[2] The Sowing fowl, the fowls sacrificed in connexion with the sowing of paddy.

796 When the village priest has sacrificed the fowls they cook them with rice into a hash, and all the men of the village eat this. The fowl for Jaher era and the fowl for Mṛṛko the village priest alone eats. The next day or the day after this they have offerings in every house; they make sacrifices to the Abge bonga, the House bonga, and the ancestors, and Maraṅ buru.

When they have finished planting the rice they offer in the month of Sau (middle of July to middle of August) the "Green" fowls[9], that the paddy may grow green. On this occasion they sacrifice only to the village bongas. Then also they make the same invocation, they only insert the words "for the sake of the Green fowl" instead of "for the sake of the Sowing fowl".

The offering of the first fruits of iṛi and gundli takes place in the month of Bhador (middle of August to middle of September). Then the village priest bathes and goes to the highland field of such a one where the crops have first ripened, and whatever he, standing in one place, is able to cut, this he takes to the Sacred grove, and after having cleaned the places with cow-dung, he offers it to the bongas of the Sacred grove in succession, first to Jaher era, thereupon to Mṛṛko, thereupon to Maraṅ hor[10], then to Gosae era, and finally to Pargana. Thereupon he pours out milk as a libation, and he makes
[539] an invocation: He greeted then, Father my Ṭhakur, Jaher era, here as ye see, new crops, new ears I am giving ye, handing ye; consequently we shall eat, take it into our mouth; do not let stomach-ache, head-ache be created, be formed, Lord, Father, my Ṭhakur. After this he goes to the village, and in the same way in the Mañjhi than, making an invocation to Mañjhi haram, he makes an offering to him. What is left, the village priest takes with him.

Janthar (the offering of first-fruits of low-land paddy) they offer in the month of Aghar (middle of November to middle of December). At this time the village people buy a pig or a ram. This they call the sacrificial animal for Janthar. This sacrifice the priest of the outskirts offers at the place of the Pargana in the Sacred grove. What is needed for the sacrifice the priest of the outskirts has to provide, and also the rice for cooking the hash of and eating the sacrificed animal he has to give. When the sacrifice is per-
[539] formed, the men alone eat it. The invocation is as follows: Be greeted then, Father my Ṭhakur, Pargana, in the name of the Janthar we are giving thee, handing thee sacrifices, offerings; consequently we shall eat, take it into our mouth, do not let stomach-ache, headache be created, be formed; in the ricefields, on the threshing-floors we shall reap, we shall thresh; mayest thou make it fertile, make it rich; mayest thou add to it, multiply it; rat and field-mouse will attack it; these also thou wilt restrain, keep back, Father, my Ṭhakur. — The village priest offers the first-fruits of the paddy, as he did of the iṛi and gundli. The village people also offer the first-fruits of paddy in every house.

[9] "Green" naturally refers not to the colour of the fowls, but to the growing crops.

[10] Maraṅ hor is here used instead of Maraṅ buru.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

Sohrae[11] is our great festival. We have this in the month of Pus (middle of December to middle of January), when we have reaped and threshed the paddy. As we have got fresh crops, we also fill our bongas; and our relatives we also entertain, as we have food and drink. Small and big, poor widows included, all of us then feast. 796 •

The village headman gathers the village people to have a council. Then they fix the time for the Sohrae. The village headman now gives the Godet an order: Do collect the beer-contributions and tell them in every house that they are to brew beer; after so and so many days we shall bathe for the Sohrae. In every house they now brew beer, and they invite their respective relatives to come. On the fixed day sisters and daughters, sisters' children and male relatives, all come together. In the evening of the day before they bathe the Godet takes three fowls and brings them to the village priest, two white ones and one speckled. The village priest binds them, and this night he himself observes religious abstinence, that is to say, he lies on the ground on a mat. When it becomes dawn, the Godet takes one fowl and half-a-seer rice together with salt and turmeric in every house. Having had her bath the wife of the village priest comes and pounds meal for the priest. About the middle of the forenoon (ca. 9 o'clock) the village priest goes out to the water's edge to sacrifice. The Godet goes along with the priest, taking the fowls collected in the village with him; a couple of the men of the village also go along.

After having bathed and come up from the water the village priest makes a magic square, plastering a long spot with cow-dung, in the direction of North and South. Along the magic square he puts small handfuls of rice in many places; thereupon he makes marks of sindur near the small heaps of rice, three marks at each heap. Thereupon he sprinkles water on the speckled one of the fowls that were taken the first day, and applies sindur to its head, and thereupon sindur to its wings and legs. Next he puts an egg down on the small heaps of rice, marking it with sindur; and letting the fowl eat from the rice, he makes an invocation: Be greeted then, Jaher era, Father my Thakur, in the name of the Sohrae this is given to thee, handed to thee; with pleasure and delight mayest thou receive, mayest thou accept this; this mayest thou be pleased with, mayest thou be agreeable to; we are inexperienced girls, inexperienced boys, we do not know and recognize; in the plastering, in the cleaning with cow-dung, in the observances, in the religious abstinence, where anything may have been forgotten, been indifferently done, we do not know, do not recognize it; may ye bear it, suffer it. In former times, in some manner or other, our ancestors of old, in silk clothes, in women's sindur-red attire, received ye, met ye, Father my Thakur. In the village, in the settlement do not let stomach-ache, headache enter, do not let it intrude; relatives, persons of our sept, from the other side of the big river, from the other side of the stream we have invited, we have notified sister's sons and daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, they will dance and enjoy themselves, may there 796 539 782

[11] See Dictionary s. v.

[12] Oslo Etn. Mus. — Bodding.

796 be no spells, no enchantments, no loss, no waste, no quarrel, no dispute, may they dance with joy, enjoy themselves, Lord Father, my Ṭhakur.

[782] Thereupon he sacrifices the speckled fowl. In the same way he sacrifices to all the [539] bongas. Having cooked the fowls with rice into a hash, all the men of the village eat them. And the collected beer they drink there. All the people of the village, poor and others, then ask each other: Well, how is it? Perhaps some among us have a fever or are ill? If this is the case, we must let each other know. The village men then answer: We are well, Father headman, by your grace. The village headman then says: By the grace of Ṭhakur we shall all get what is good. As we see, we have brought the Sohrae festival, the great Elder Sister has arrived. For five days and five nights dance and enjoy yourselves, brothers and sisters; let there be no disputes, no quarrels, no covetousness, no greed; if there is any covetousness and greed, look out well, also the fenced vegetables you may pluck, but not what is climbing on poles, nor what is shrivelled up, pluck what is unripe; and the flowers that they have fixed with laths, have tied with thread, do not commit the sin of plucking these flowers for us, Sirs. The village men then answer: With twelve balls of cotton we are shutting our ears up; then whatever there may be, small or big, we shall not see or listen to it[12]. Thereupon they sing[13]:

[539]

Who created	Ṭhakur created	Ṭirmuṭi created
The wide earth?	The wide world.	Kanu the Goala.
Who created	Ṭhakur created	Towards the East he drove
The cattle, you there?	The cattle, you there.	The cattle, you there.
Who created	Ṭhakur created	Towards the East he drove
The cattle?	The cattle.	The cattle.

Where, young man, did you lose	On the road I lost
The flute at your waist?	The flute at my waist.
Where, young man, did you lose	At the place of worship I lost
The cattle, you there?	The cattle, you there.
Where, young man, did you lose	At the place of worship I lost
The cattle?	The cattle.

Thereupon they call the cattle-herd boys: Come with them, fellows, bring the cattle, we shall let them trample on the magic square and blot it out. They then drive the cattle near to the magic square. The village priest now asks for all the sticks of the cattle-herds;

[834] [12] The expressions used all refer to women; they must not touch those who are too young or too old, and not married ones. It is shameless. [13] In a kind of Bihari.

2; Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

he puts them down at the magic square; he applies sindur to every single stick of theirs. Thereupon they drive the cattle near to the magic square. 796

Any cow[14], who treads on or smells at the egg put down there, this cow they catch and, washing her legs, they anoint her horns with oil, and apply sindur to her horns. The herd of this cow they lift up and place him on some one's shoulder, and bring him to the village headman and put him down there. The boy bows to the headman and after him to all the elderly men there.

Now they go home, drumming the dancing-drum as they go along. They enter the house of the village priest, who gives them beer. After they have drunk this, they proceed to the house of the village headman, who also gives them beer. At this time the village headman says to the Jog MāAjhi and the Jog Paranik: So long as the festival lasts, the young men and girls are in your charge, and the festival is also in your charge. If you let the village street become deserted, we shall fine both of you. Thereupon they separate. They take food and drink beer in their respective houses.

It is evening. The elderly men and women go to bed, and the young men blow[15] the cattle. Standing at the door of the cow-shed they drum the dancing drum and sing[16]: [539]

The cows have gone to the Siribandha forest,
The buffalo-cows are grazing on the other side of the Ganges.

The cows come home when the sun sets,
The buffalo-cows come home, after having grazed, at midnight.

On what horn is it to get oil and sindur?
Where on its back is grass and paddy to be strewed on it?

In this way they sing, drum, and blow the flute at every house exceedingly, and all along the village street they shout indecently. Although they hear this in every house, they do not listen to it.

After these the girls perform the waving ceremony over the cattle. They also commence at the house of the village headman. They bring with them sun-dried rice, and sun-dried paddy, mixed together, dhubi grass and a lighted lamp. They make an invocation: Take it, you reddish one, through you, reddish one, may there become one hundred reddish [782] ones, by your guiding them, following them, fill this cattle shed, this place of omen, fill [539] it to overflow; may you earn, may you produce, to the backside of the house, to its cave; [192]

[14] The word used may also mean any piece of cattle, not necessarily a cow. [15] The word translated "blow" is ordinarily used about "awaken"; the object of the proceedings is to cause the cattle to become fruitful and effective. [16] In a kind of Bihari.

796 782 539 may water from the eaves fall down on it, may mushrooms spring up, your owner, your watchman, on the other side of the big river, on the other side of the stream, co-parents-in-law, their near relatives, may they eat, may they drink; hear it you, listen you, the Turks' measure of capacity[17], awfully large, your owner, your watchman with his arrow, his battle-axe may he dig and smite, pierce and smite.

Take it, you Sugi, through you, Sugi, may there become one hundred Sugis, by carrying them on your hip, by bearing them, guiding them, following them up here, may you fill this cow-shed, this place of omen, fill it to overflow, your owner, your watchman on the other side of the big river, on the other side of the stream, co-parents-in-law, their near relatives, may they eat, may they drink, hear it you, listen you, the Turks' measure of capacity, awfully large, your owner, your watchman with his arrow, his battle-axe may he dig and smite, may he pierce and smite.

At the same time when they make this invocation they strew out the dhubi grass and the sun-dried paddy and rice towards the cattle-shed and the cows. Then they sing[18]:

Having taken sun-dried rice in the hand,
Having arranged the betel nut, a bunch,
Come along, so and so goddess, at the proper time
To bless waving over the cows.

More than once waving and blessing
To wave and bless twice is great.
This happened on the big bullock
Alone.

Wherefore are you crying, bullock?
Wherefore are you worrying, bullock?
I shall give you, my son,
Excellent betelnut.

Slowly he will go, slowly he will go,
The young bullock;
Afterwards I shall apply sindur.

796 539 In this way the girls perform the waving ceremony in house after house and continue singing at every cattle-shed. In the village street they sing in another way:

[17] The translation is literal; no Santal has been able to explain to the writer what is really meant. [18] In corrupt Bihari.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

796 • 539

The dove is always on the move,
The crow is eating with legs spread out,
The young servant of the headman's family
To-morrow he will go out;
The servant girl of the deputy headman's family,
Later in the day she will come out.

At the cow-shed of people who have buffalo cows they sing the praise of these differently, when they perform the waving ceremony:

Whose cows are these? the cows are shining white.
Whose buffalo cows are these? the buffalo cow is black and bulky.

The cows of so and so, the cows are shining white.
The buffalo cows of so and so, the buffalo cow is black and bulky.

The leg of the buffalo cow is thick and fat,
The leg of the green dove is covered with feather low down.

These ones went to the Sihegor forest,
These ones went to the Manegor forest.

Do, you so and so, turn them round,
Do, you so and so, turn them round back.

In the Sihegor forest, mother, is the tiger,
In the Manegor forest is the young leopard.

These will graze making scratching sounds in the straw pins,
The saline soil you will clear quickly.

The young men finish blessing the cattle, and the girls also bring the waving ceremony to an end; thereupon they all wander in the village street and sing; they drum the dancing-drum and the kettle-drum, and blow the flute, that is to say, the young men do this and the girls beat the cymbals and dance, they make a tremendous din and noise. [533] [534]

At cockcrow the young men again bless the cattle once, and following after them the girls perform the waving ceremony. The young men sing[10]:

The cock has crowed,
It has dawned.
Get up, my son, to let the cattle out to graze.
Get up, my son, to let the cattle out to graze.

[10] In corrupt Bihari.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

•796
539

Don't, father, make me stand up,
Don't, father, awaken me;
The sleepiness is calling out to me,
The sleepiness is calling out to me.

In his hand he took the stick,
On his feet he took the wooden sandals;
He went along, so and so man,
To let the cattle out to graze.

The girls sing, when they perform the waving ceremony over the cattle in the morning[20]:

The cock has crowed,
It has become morning;
Get up, my son, you so and so,
To let the cattle out to graze.

Don't, mother, make me stand up,
Don't, mother, awaken me;
The sleepiness is calling out to me.

In his hand he took the stick,
On his feet he took the wooden sandals;
He went along, so and so man,
To turn the cattle round.

The stick of gold, mother,
Will turn the cattle round.
The silver-flute, mother,
The flute he will blow.

When they have finished the waving ceremony, the cattle-herds let the cattle out. The girls stop dancing and begin to do their separate work. And the young men dance the ḍaṇḍa[21] in the street outside the village headman's house. They sing:

Come along, children,
We shall go to catch fish.
The fish was pierced by a thorn,
The fish was pierced by a thorn;
We shall go along leaving the marsh,
We shall go along leaving the marsh.

[20] In corrupt Bihari. [21] See Dictionary s. v.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

796 [539]

Some say the old man is dead;
Some say he is alive.
Exorcise him slowly, sitting,
Smearing red earth on him.
The old man is fidgeting.
The old man is fidgeting.

The women do their separate work, clean the ground with cow-dung, make flour, and so on; and after having finished dancing the young men go about and beg for fun's sake. Once they beat the brushwood fences from one end of the village street to the other end, and when they reach the house of the Goḍet, they shut the Goḍet in, closing the door to the village street. The Goḍet then gives them one earthenware pot with beer. Then they open (the door) for him. Thereupon they continue beating right up to the end of the village street. There at the end they make different "dancers" of straw; when they have made these ready, they take them to the house of the village headman. Here they make them dance, and the headman gives them rice. In this way they beg from house to house. When they have done begging, they give what they have begged together in charge in the house of the Jog Mañjhi. Now all the men go to bathe, taking yokes, battle-axes, and knives along with them. They have their bath and come back. [431]

Thereupon they sacrifice fowls and pigs in every house. They sacrifice them to Maraṅ buru and to the house-bongas; to the ancestors they fell them. With flour they make the magic squares, two; in the middle of each they put down a small heap of rice and they make five marks of sindur, and on the animal to be sacrificed they sprinkle water and smear sindur on it, on its head, shoulder, and hoofs. Thereupon they let it feed on the rice in the magic square, and they make an invocation: Be greeted then, Maraṅ buru, Father my Ṭhakur, now then, in the name of the Sohrae, I am giving thee, handing to thee offerings, sacrifices; with this mayest thou be pleased, be agreeable; with pleasure, with delight thou wilt receive it, accept it, thou wilt fondle it, consider it great; formerly the ancestors of old received ye, met ye in silk clothes, in sindur-red women's attire; we are inexperienced girls, inexperienced boys, we do not know, do not recognize; in the plastering, in the cleaning with cow-dung, in the observances, in the religious abstinences, some may have been forgotten, been indifferently done; may ye bear it, may ye suffer it all, Father my Ṭhakur. Thereupon they make further invocations; but these I have quoted formerly. They make the same kind of invocation to the house-bongas. And letting the fowls feed on rice on a small leaf-plate they fell them, offering them to the ancestors, and they pour beer on the ground as a libation to Maraṅ buru and the ancestors. [782] [539]

Having finished the sacrifices they prepare rice and curry. They cook separately the flesh of the animals offered to the ancestors. This they throw down to them together with

[796] [782] [539] the rice. At that time they make the following invocation: Be greeted then, white-haired one, Father my Ṭhakur, in the name of the Sohrae I am giving ye, handing to ye rotten food, rotten cooked rice, with this may ye be pleased, be agreeable. On the other side of the big river, on the other side of the stream, relatives, people of our own sept, daughters, sisters we have invited, we have notified; what remains, what is left by ye, they will eat, take into their mouth; do not let stomach-ache, headache be created, be formed, Father my Ṭhakur. They make some further long invocations. Thereupon they all eat and drink.

[539] They sing:

Small, small fowls and pigs,
Numerous are your relatives;
I shall prepare the rice, the curry,
As for me, Father, I will certainly not serve it out.

When they have eaten, they paint atnaḳ leaves with wetted flour in the door of the cattle-shed, that it may look nice, and on the posts of the cattle-shed they splash flour-water and smear sindur; the yokes and the bar-posts they also treat in the same way. The married men and women go from house to house and drink beer and sing, and the young men and girls dance the whole night along in the village street.

[539] When married men and women go to an other house to drink beer, they sing, as they go:

This year, Father, make my cloth bordered,
Next year, Father, make my cloth with white and red stripes.
The village headmen of the Jhariā paṭi country
Are coming on a visit.

[539] In the house where they go in, the people of this house meet them singing:

Please, sit down,
Please, stand;
Food and drink, my companion, we have none,
To meet and see each other, my companion, is a bewitching courtesy.

He made bad seasons, my companion,
He made good seasons;
Seed and seed-grain, my companion, we did not get;
All my children have become utter paupers.

Next day dawns. Then they drum the kettle-drum at the village headman's house, in order that the people may come together. The leading men of the village assemble. When they have gathered, the village headman asks them: How is it, are we, poor people, all

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

of us well or not? They answer him: Father headman, we are well; when it is well, why should we say it is bad? The headman gives them beer without restriction; while they are drinking, the headman asks them: Well, shall we tie the bullocks to posts or not? They anwer him: Yes, Father, if you order it, we shall tie them to posts. The headman then says to the Jǫg Mạńjhi and the Jǫg Paranik: The people of the country will come, you two be on the watch and receive them for us. They get up and away from there. Thereupon the Jǫg Mạńjhi says to the young men of the village: Do dig holes for the posts. 796

To dig holes for posts is really a customary duty, in the village street outside the houses of the headman and of his deputy, of the Jǫg Mạńjhi and the Jǫg Paranik and the Goḍet; outside these five houses the Jǫg Mạńjhi makes them dig. The other village people themselves dig holes for the posts in the village street outside their respective houses and fix the posts in the ground, to tie the bullocks to these posts. The young men, who set to work, by the Jǫg Mạńjhi's order dig holes and fix posts in the ground in the village street outside the five houses mentioned. They arrange ropes to tie the bullocks. The Jǫg Mạńjhi gives the young men food and beer. The Jǫg Mạńjhi orders them to pour out and to squeeze out beer. They do this; thereupon they are set free for the time. [231]

When it becomes the early middle of the afternoon, the cattle-herds bring the cattle; they take them into their respective cow-sheds. In the cattle-shed they smear oil on them. A woman of the house, the master's wife or any other woman, washes the herd-boy at the door of the cattle-shed and anoints him with oil. She takes him inside the house and gives him cakes and parched rice. They do this in every house.

Thereupon the Jǫg Mạńjhi says to the young men of the village: Do bless the cattle and plait the straw bundles[22], commencing from the headman's house. And they bless the cattle in house after house, and one man goes along with them and plaits straw bundles. Thereupon they collect squeezed-out beer, one small pot from every house, to treat friends from the country. Thereupon they take the bullocks out to tie them to the posts. Country people also come together. The young men first tie the bullocks to the posts at the house of the village headman. When they have tied the bullocks to the posts, they lash them to make them butt. They drum the kettle-drum for them, blow flutes for them, three times they move up and down the whole village street, lashing them. Thereupon they stop and gather at the headman's house, and there also the country people come together. They all loose their own bullocks.

In the village headman's house they thereupon place bedsteads, wooden slabs to sit on, and stools before the country visitors. The Jǫg Mạńjhi then says to the young men of the village: Please, give the visitors from the country beer, each two leaf-cups of poured-out beer and two leaf-cups squeezed-out beer, and give all the people each one handful of flattened and parched rice. They do this. Then they sing[23]:

[22] See Dictionary s. v. dhāsa. [23] In corrupt Bihari.

19 Oslo Etn. Mus. — Bodding.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

1796
[539]

Hearing the sound of the kettle-drum
You came, brothers-in-law;
Sit down on the gold-strapped bed.
We did nothing at all,
Brothers-in-law, as we are filled with joy.

One bowl tobacco,
Smoke this first, brothers-in-law,
It is a fine custom.
Drink at once one brass-cup water,
Brothers-in-law, a great enjoyment.

The country people answer[a]:

Cup after cup of beer, know this,
We have drunk, brothers-in-law,
Leaf-cup after leaf-cup of soup with the castrated goat.
We have not done or arranged anything for you,
Brothers-in-law, as we are filled with joy.

[535] Thereupon the young men of the village and the young men among the visitors dance the sword-dance in the village street outside the headman's house, and the people look on. When they have finished dancing, the visitors go away to their various villages, and the young people of the village wander about in the village street the whole night. Some of the young men and girls appropriate things; from house after house they take Taro[b], egg-plant fruits, beans, and tubers; with straw-rope they make two tiny bundles, and some of it they keep aside for themselves to eat. One bundle they hang up in the headman's door and one bundle in the Paranik's door. Then they sing:

[539]

Be careful coming out, Sir headman,
You might knock against the tubers and Taro and hurt yourself.

Give us, Sir headman, our ash-pot,
We shall cook and eat tubers and Taro.

The headman then brings one earthenware pot with beer out to the young men. Also in the house of the Paranik they get, by singing in the same way, one earthenware pot with beer. Both these pots of beer the young men and girls pour out and drink in the village street outside the headman's house, and they dance the whole night until dawn. When day dawns, the Jog Mâjhi and the Jog Paranik make the young men take up the

[a] Is corrupt Sihort. [b] Arum Colocasia, Wild.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

posts fixed in the street. On this occasion the young men collect one egg from every house, making fun. One of them "dies", and carrying him into the house, they exorcize him and sing chants: 796 • [539]

Above it sounds like scraping,
Below it is stiff:
If you exorcize, let the exorcizing take effect,
Otherwise I shall go and plough the sun-grass thicket.

They get one egg and one handful of rice; thereupon the "dead" person quickly comes alive. They act in this way in every house.

When they have finished this, the young men and girls and women do the final functions (dancing and begging) at every house, commencing at the headman's house. Entering the courtyard they sing[28]: [431] [539]

The Jugis beg
For twelve years;
The young men beg
Just this day;
The young men beg
Just this day.

He does not ask for much,
He does not ask for a little,
He asks for one winnowing-fan of paddy
And one small pot of poured-out beer.

In this way they get paddy, split peas, salt, and beer in house after house. When dancing they sing songs, mutually blaming each other. The young men sing, blaming the girls for having maimed hands, and the girls sing, blaming the young men for having swollen legs; they sing, blaming each other in many ways. When they have finished begging at every house, they give all in charge in the house of the Jog Mañjhi during the night. They then dance at the last house and sing ḍahar and other songs. [431] [539]

In the mustard, in the mustard they make their nest;
In the middle-sized earthenware pot they make the juice.
In the large basket are rustlingly the straw bundles,
Witness the strong buzzing sound.

The people of this house give them one earthenware pot of beer, twenty cakes, and five seers of flattened and parched rice. This they eat and drink. They call this dew beer. [431]

[28] In corrupt Bihari.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

796 When the young men and girls have finished dancing, they again go to the house of the Jog Mañjhi, to pass the night there. When it becomes dawn next day, the girls plaster the courtyard in the house of the Jog Mañjhi with cow-dung, they draw and bring water, and the young men collect and bring together the straw bundles put on the heads of the bullocks. This they thresh, and this and the paddy that they gathered at the final dancing and begging the Jog Mañjhi measures out to the girls, dividing it between them, to make rice. Thereupon the Jog Mañjhi gives the young men and girls their noon meal. When they have eaten, he gives them in charge in their respective homes. Now the Sohrae is at an end.

When the girls have made the paddy that the Jog Mañjhi measured out to them in rice, they bring it to him. Of this he brews beer. After some ten days he gathers all the people of the village in his house. He gives them this beer, and he gives food to the young men and girls. This beer they call the chaṭiar (social cleansing) beer of the young men and girls. By this beer the young men and girls are "eaten" back into society again; their exemption is ended, and the closed ears of the village people are also opened.

The Sakrat[27] is the last day of the month of Pus. On the day two days before this day they have a village council and talk together, saying: To-morrow we shall catch fish and crabs, the day after we shall have the Sakrat. Consequently next day they catch fish and crabs. On the day of the Sakrat they at cockcrow kill a fowl in every house. When they have prepared rice and curry and have returned from bathing, they eat the rice and flesh curry, curry of fish, and crabs or any other stuff. When the sun is up, the men go to hunt. They hunt in a near forest. They bring Sal-leaves home with them; they go to bathe and return. In the meantime the women have prepared flattened rice and cakes. This the men offer to the bongas in every house, they offer it to the ancestors, and they pour out beer as a libation to these and to Marañ buru. Thereupon they make invocations in the name of the Sakrat, like the invocations at other times. They eat the cakes and the flattened rice. When they have eaten, the Jog Mañjhi invites them to come along and shoot at a target. He cuts down a plantain tree or a ricinus tree and takes this along. In the open place at the end of the village street he fixes it in the ground. Now the village priest first shoots at the target post. After him all the village men shoot, until it is hit. Then when some one has hit it, the Jog Mañjhi goes and cuts the target post down with a battle-axe, and the Jog Mañjhi carries the one who hit it on his shoulder from there to the assembled people. And they both salute all the people, commencing from the village headman.

[526]

[535] Now the young men dance the sword-dance and make many kinds of show. When they have finished acting in this way, they return to the village. The target post that the Jog Mañjhi cut down two men carry along on their shoulders like an animal. All enter the

[192]

[27] Hindi saṅkrānt, the passage of the sun into a new sign.

house of the village headman. This target post they call the headman's piece of hunt-meat. The village headman gives them beer and flattened and parched rice. At this time the headman speaks, saying: As you were so many tenants, you felled the hateful enemy and saved me, otherwise he might have eaten me. 796

When they have drunk there, they move away to the house of the Paranik. Here they also get flattened and parched rice and beer. From there, urging each other, they go here and there to hospitable people and drink beer. The young men and girls dance lagṛē in the village street outside the house of the village headman. When they have done dancing, they go to their respective houses to lie down and sleep. [535]

The Magh fowl they sacrifice in the month of Magh (middle of January to middle of February) for the sake of reaping the thatching grass. From every house they collect one half-seer of rice or bajṛa to brew beer. The Goḍet brews beer of this. The owner of the cow that trampled on the magic square in the Sohrae also brews one separate pot of beer. They brew beer in every house. On the day fixed the Goḍet collects one fowl and one half-seer of rice and salt and turmeric from every house. The Goḍet takes it all to the place at the water's edge where the village priest is to make the offering. The beer that the Goḍet has brewed, and the feast-beer of the owner of the cow that trampled on the magic square, this also the Goḍet takes to the place where the village priest is to offer. After having bathed in the water there the village priest comes up to the magic square and offers the fowls. He offers them to Mṛṇko, Jaher era, Marañ buru, Pargana, Gosāe era, and Maṅjhi haṛam and to the bongas that have come up and have been met with along the boundary. He makes an invocation as on other occasions. When he has performed the sacrifices, they make a hash with rice of them and eat them; the beer they also drink. Some of the hash goes by customary right to certain people. The following get: the village headman and his deputy and the Goḍet, the Jog Maṅjhi, the Jog Paranik, the village priest, and the priest of the outskirts, the reapers of the thatching grass, the carters, the thatchers, the water drawers, the bringers of firewood and leaves, the cook, and the beer brewer, they all get one portion each; only the village priest and the priest of the outskirts get two portions each.

At this time they talk together; the village headman says: Well, Sirs, as is seen here at the end of the month of Magh, the thieves have a month of Magh, the farmers also have a month of Magh, the village headman and his deputy also have a month of Magh, servants and servant girls also have a month of Magh, consequently we have all got the month of Magh. Well, if any of you will become our village headman, I also give up my position in the month of Magh. The Paranik, Jog Maṅjhi, Jog Paranik, Goḍet, the village priest, and the priest of the outskirts also speak in the same way, saying: We also, Sir, have reached the end of managing. Then the village tenants say: Also we, Sir, have reached the end, we give our riceland and grounds into your charge, Father headman, so

796 long as the hot season lasts; only our old sites[28] we shall continue to occupy; these we do not give into your charge, and our huts we shall also keep. The headman answers: Then since you have given it up, what will become of me? I am here. So those who go we shall take away and leave them; they who come, we shall bring here[29]. Thereupon they return to the village, each with one bundle thatching grass and five or six laths.

Arrived in the village they pretend to thatch the house of the village priest, and they drink beer at his place. In a similar way they pretend to thatch the houses of the village headman, the Paranik, the Jǫg Mạṅjhi, the Jǫg Paranik, the Goḍet, and the priest of the outskirts, and drink beer at each place. Thereupon they drink beer in their respective houses together with a couple of friends, and the young people dance lagrẹ until they get enough of it.

Five, six, or ten days later the village headman calls the village people together in his house. He has brewed beer; first he gives them two leaf-cups each. Then they ask him: Look here, Sir, what beer is this? He answers: This is the broken rice that they collected; it is beer brewed on this. They reply: Yes, Sir, it is broken rice, quite so; but listen, do they not say: When you prepare rice and curry, it is the salt that makes it tasty; when you give beer or liquor, it is the words that make it tasty; we are not getting the meaning of it. Then the village headman answers them: This is nothing, honourable village people; as you remember, I gave up my position in the month of Magh; now then, I am staying on again, if you village people are pleased with me. They reply to him: Yes, Sir, so many days we also have been waiting for you; therefore we have not tried to speak to anybody; we said: Perhaps his mind will be turned, our Father headman's; an old king, an old bonga, that is good; we have known you as our headman; where shall we find the shade of such a luxuriously foliaged tree? Thereupon he gives them plenty of beer.

In the same way a day later the Paranik calls the village people together, and, giving them beer, he asks them to get his work again. After this the Jǫg Mạṅjhi, the Jǫg Paranik, the Goḍet, the village priest, and the priest of the outskirts each separately give them beer, and each pretends to get his work back; and after them every single tenant gives the village headman and his deputy and the village people beer and pretends to ask to get his lands back. This is a pretext for drinking beer to make the unoccupied time pass.

Baha (the Flower festival) is our other great festival. This comes in the month of Phalgun (middle of February to middle of March) at the third quarter of the moon. This is a festival in connexion with the turning of the year. The Sal trees blossom at this time, the icạk̄ and the muruṗ also blossom, and the Mahua gets flowers. Before we have the Flower festival, we do not suck the icạk̄ flowers or the muruṗ flowers, and we do not deck ourselves with Sal flowers, and we do not eat the Mahua either. If any one sucks

[192] [28] The "old sites" are understood to be the wives. [29] The two sentences refer to death and birth.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

or eats these before this festival, to their houses the village priest will not go, and he will not eat or drink anything of theirs until the Flower festival is held. The Flower festival is our righteous festival, not licentious like the Hohrae. 796

When the fixed day comes, on the day of bathing, the young men of the village put up two roofs in the sacred grove, one for Jaher era, Mŏṛṭko, and Marañ buru, and one for Gosāe era. The village priest plasters all the bonga-places with cow-dung and goes away; thereupon they go to bathe. When they have bathed, the young thatchers come to the house of the village priest, who gives them beer and food. When they have eaten, they call on each other to come along to the village forest to hunt. When the village priest has eaten, he washes a winnowing-fan, a flat basket, bow and arrows, a battle axe, a broom, a bonga wristlet, a neck-chain, a small bell, and a horn, and brings these things up from the water. Thereupon he smears ground spices and oil on the implements mentioned, and on a new earthenware thin-necked vessel, and a skein of thread he also smears with the same. The young men return from the hunt, and evening sets in.

Thereupon the Godet takes three fowls to the village priest. These they call the priest-fowls. As soon as the evening sets in, they drum the kettle-drum and blow the horn in the house of the village priest; when they hear this, the bonga-possessed persons come, and the village people also assemble. They all assemble in the house of the village priest. The priest brings their sacrificial implements out. The possessed ones are three persons: the Jaher era comes possessing one, one is the Mŏṛṭko, and one is Marañ buru. The Jaher era gropes about and puts on the neck-chain, takes the flat basket on the head, and takes the broom; the Mŏṛṭko takes the bow and arrows, and Marañ buru carries the battle-axe on his shoulder. After this they run off to the sacred grove, and the young men of the village follow after them and pursue them. When they arrive in the sacred grove, the Jaher era sweeps the bonga-places clean, and the two others look on. When they have done this, they return to their homes.

Thereupon the village priest asks the bongas for their implements, holding his hands up imploringly. When they have given them to him, he makes them sit down on a mat. When they have sat down, he gives each of them one handful of rice, to make them understand how matters are. Like the invocations they make at the time when they bring the bongas up at the foundation of a new village, they now also make the same invocations. Having asked how matters are, the village priest asks them to give the rice back, and he puts this in a winnowing-fan. Thereupon he asks the bongas: Please, my Lords, will ye, as ye pass along, see the rainy season rain, the burning rain, or not? Then the bongas answer: As we pass along we shall see, we shall listen, for what purpose should we turn to the right or to the left?

Thereupon the village priest washes their feet, first of the Jaher era, thereupon of the Mŏṛṭko, and finally of Marañ buru. When he has done this, he pours out the remaining

796 water on the three bongas and rinses them with this. Just as he has done this, they at once jump up screaming. Now the Jaher era commences to wash. He washes the feet first of the Mōṛēko, thereupon of Maraṅ buru, thereupon of the two, the village priest and his wife, thereupon of the village headman and of his deputy, of the kettle-drum drummer, of the horn blower and of the singer, and what is left of the water after washing he pours out on their heads. They also call out screaming. The village priest asks the Jaher era to get back the vessel in which the washing water was, and he makes them sit down on the mat like at first. Thereupon the village priest, in order to induce the spirits to leave, says to them: Please, my Lords, now time has passed, it is late, the horses, the umbrellas have become tired, depart ye. They drum the kettle-drum for them and blow the horn. They come to, and the village priest gives to each of them a brass-cup of beer, and also to the village people, that is, to all the men who have gone there, he gives beer and food. To the singer they give beer and food separately, somewhat more, and they do not let him go home either.

796 539 Now they commence to dance, and the singer sings in advance for them:

High up in the Pipal tree,
There, Lord, the Crimson-breasted Barbet is singing;
In the hanging branches of the Banyan tree
There, Lord, the Woodpecker breathes.

The country has turned round,
Lord, the Crimson-breasted Barbet is singing;
The country has turned back again,
The Woodpecker, Lord, breathes.

It has certainly turned round,
Lord, the Crimson-breasted Barbet is singing;
It has certainly turned back again,
Lord, the Woodpecker breathes.

Who of you cared for him?
Lord, the Crimson-breasted Barbet is singing;
Who of you was anxious for him?
Lord, the Woodpecker breathes.

The Five cared for him,
Lord, the Crimson-breasted Barbet is singing;
The Six were anxious for him,
Lord, the Woodpecker breathes.

21 Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

796
539

He did certainly care for him;
Lord, the Crimson-breasted Barbet is singing;
He was certainly anxious for him;
Lord, the Woodpecker breathes.

•

In accordance with custom I have put
On my hand a ring;
In accordance with custom I have put
On my leg an anklet.

Where have you, my elder sister,
On your hand the ring?
Where have you, my elder sister,
On your leg the anklet?

In the water of the hollowed-out hole I let it fall,
O mother, the ring on my hand.
In the water of the pool I let it slip down
The anklet on my leg.

Why, my friend picked up
The ring on my hand;
Why, my companion took up
The anklet on my leg.

Tell him to give
The ring on my hand;
Tell him to hand over
The anklet on my leg.

With your friend is not
The ring on my hand;
Nor with your companion is
The anklet on your leg.

They dance the whole night until dawn, and they sing some very beautiful songs. In the Flower festival there are only beautiful songs; there is nothing indecent. The village priest and his wife both pass the night lying on the ground, to observe religious abstinence. 796

When the day dawns, the wife of the village priest, after having come back from bathing, pounds flour. And the Godet catches fowls in the village, one fowl from each house.

2: Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

• 796 further a pinch of rice, salt, and turmeric. The village priest arranges his requisites for sacrificing, a new large flat basket, a small flat basket, in which he puts sun-dried rice. The oil, the sindur, and the spices he also arranges in this, and in a winnowing-fan he puts the flour and a battle-axe. In the large flat basket he arranges a chain, an armlet and a broom, just these things; and the bow and arrows, the horn and one narrow-necked earthenware vessel an unmarried young man carries along. The narrow-necked earthenware vessel they call the good omen vessel. Now they go to the sacred grove. Following [539] immediately after the village priest the young men and girls dance and sing, as they pass along:

The hard verandah, the verandah of abstinence,
To-day the village priest spent the night on a bamboo mat,
To-day the village priest lay abstinent on the floor on a bamboo mat.

•

Of the house, of the house,
Of the stately house,
Of the homestead, of the homestead
In the leaf-cup mustard.

Who of you will put it down
In the stately house?
Who of you will receive
In the leaf-cup mustard?

The Mŏṛṣko will put it down
In the stately house;
The Jaher era will receive
In the leaf-cup the mustard.

They first take omens
For the forest country;
They wander round about
In the villages, the hamlets.

It is there, it is there,
The cow with the black female calf.
It is there, it is there
The speckled pullet.

The village priest goes to bathe; when he has come back from bathing, he applies cow-dung to the bonga-places. At this moment the men again become possessed by the bongas. The bongas get their separate implements, like yesterday night; when they have got them, they run off to the forest. The young men run after them. Any Sal tree that has got very fine flowers, this the Mŏṛṣko bonga shoots at with an arrow, and the Marań buru bonga climbs this tree and snips the flowers off and lets them fall down. The Jaher era receives the flowers in her flat basket. When Marań buru comes down from the tree, they pick Mahua flowers up and take them along to the sacred grove. Thereupon the village priest, with a cloth round his neck, receives the bongas, the flowers, and the implements, all of it.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

Now the village priest makes the bongas sit down on a mat under the shed, and he himself sits down in front of the bongas and sacrifices fowls. The invocation is the same, only that the priest inserts the words "in the name of the Flower festival". At each of the bongas of the sacred grove the priest puts down one flower bud and one Mahua, at each bonga-place. Thereupon they sing: 796

[539]

The Mōṛṣko are five brothers,
The Turuiko are six brothers.

The rainy season rain comes peltingly,
The rain of Sita's valley comes drizzlingly.

What will they use for plastering?
What will they use for levelling?

Milk they will use for plastering,
Cream they will use for levelling.

Here, please, is your oil, your sindur;
Here, please, is your eye-paint, your roṛa bark[20].

Receive your oil, your sindur,
Accept your eye-paint, your roṛa bark.

Thereupon the village priest says to the bonga-possessed ones: Please, Lords, look out for what is yours, listen to what is yours. The priest then goes aside; the bongas sip the blood of the fowls that has trickled down. The priest washes the feet of the bongas. The Jaher era washes the feet of the priest in return; thereupon they splash water on each other. And the priest makes them come to. The dancing girls ask the priest for flowers. They sing:

We two shall ask, my elder sister, we two shall ask
The Mōṛṣko for Sal flowers. [539]

The girls and the young men each separately receive flowers from the priest and bow to him. Thereupon they sing dancing:

[539]

The wild cow, the wild cow
Runs out, runs in;
Very nice is the wild cow.

The Bison cow, the Bison cow
Runs out, runs in;
Very nice is the Bison cow.

[20] Mallotus philippensis, Müll. Arg.

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

796 [539] The young men and girls then return to the village, dancing the whole way. They sing:

The blind buffalo wallowed
In the Sinjo river,
In the Sinjo river, girls, the two girls
In the big river.

The priest cooks the speckled fowl into a hash in the sacred grove, and some of the villagers cook the other fowls into a hash. When it is cooked, they call the wife of the village priest to the sacred grove. The priest and his wife eat the speckled fowl, and the villagers who are there, eat the other fowls. All of them go home, only the village priest remains in the sacred grove.

The village people offer fowls and pigs in their own houses. When they have cooked them, they eat and drink. When it becomes the middle of the afternoon, a few men go to the sacred grove. There they drum the kettle-drum and blow the horn. Now the village people know that the priest is coming, and they say: Come along, we shall go and meet the priest. Then they go to the sacred grove. When they have reached there, the priest arranges flowers in the flat basket; this he lets a young man carry on his head, while he himself takes two or three flowers and the winnowing-fan in his armpit and carries a loṭa with water suspended from his hand. The narrow-necked omen vessel he lets the unmarried young man who is with him carry on his shoulder. In the vessel there is water. The rest of the implements some others take along. They reach the village. The village girls have in the meantime taken water in narrow-necked earthenware vessels, wooden slabs to sit on, and oil in small earthenware cups, out into the village street outside their respective houses. When the priest reaches the village, a girl washes his feet in the village street outside the first house he passes, and he gives her a flower. When she gets this, the girl bows to the priest, and he pours water on her. In the village street they do the same outside every house. Having finished this the priest goes home to his own. There they also wash him in the same way. When the priest is entering his house, he pours the water of one loṭa out on the roof, and then he goes inside. The people who follow him also go in. The priest gives each of them two leaf-cups of beer.

The girls and young men of the village have made a noise; they splash water on each other, and elderly men and women also splash water on each other, that is, people for whom this is permissible. Thereupon they dance in the court-yard of the priest. They sing:

[539]

Who is it, girls, in the court-yard,
The reddish white horse?
Who is it, girls, in the place outside
The reddish companion mare?

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

157
487

796 •
[539]

The priest is in the court-yard, girls,
The reddish white horse;
The priest is in the place outside, girls,
The reddish companion mare.

Moving up and down, moving up and down, girls,
Is the reddish white horse;
Swaying, swaying, girls,
Is the reddish companion mare.

Bind on him the bells, girls,
On the reddish white horse;
Tie on to her the jingle-belt, girls,
On the reddish companion mare.

The dancing ones dance, and the beer-drinkers drink beer. Until sunset they dance in the house of the priest singing Flower-festival songs; and when the sun has set, they go to outside the house of the village headman and dance lagre in the village street. When they have finished dancing, they go to their respective homes to lie down and sleep.

The next day the priest of the outskirts takes the Godet along with him and goes to the forest. Here he pricks himself and offers the blood to the Pargana bongas and the others. At all offerings he acts in the same way.

Offering to the Abge we have every year, sometimes in Aghan (middle of November to middle of December), sometimes in Asar (middle of June to middle of July), there is nothing fixed. To the Abge bongas we sometimes give fowls, sometimes pigs, and sometimes rams. Marak buru and the others with him are bongas common for all, but the Abge bonga belongs to each one separately. The Abge bongas watch over their respective families, in order that no fever or pain, no epidemics, no witchcraft, and no deaths or calamities shall befall them. Santals say, it is told, that if witch women get hold of the Abge bongas, then the members of the family have no possibility of being saved; they will die; therefore they exert themselves to keep their Abge bongas satisfied. And if they make vows to them at times of danger, they will stand up and save them. When they sacrifice to the Abge, only brothers invite each other and eat, the men only; they do not give the women anything. In the open field, near a white-ant hill they perform the sacrifice to the Abge bongas; the invocation is not different, it is the same at all sacrifices.

796
796
782
[593]
[562]

Also to the boundary bongas they make sacrifices every year, that is, those who plough in the places where the bongas are. The boundary bongas are very jealous; if they are not kept satisfied, they kill awfully; in a moment they make snakes appear; they make tigers eat you, or they cause disease to come suddenly; therefore we fear them very much.

776
782

St Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

173
829

Kisku Rapaz (King) and a son was born in a forest. The child was found by the Màrṇḍis who adopted him and named him Mandò Siñ. The child grew up to be an infant terrible. He surpassed every one in knowledge and battle and later became the chief officer of the Kisku Rapaz. One day he asked the king for a bride to marry. But none would give him his daughter to marry. Mandò Siñ grew furious and threatened, "If they do not give me a bride, I shall take to wife each and every girl" (by forcible application of vermilion or red dust on her forehead).

Hearing this the people became frightened. The greater portion of the population left the country, the remainder only stuck to their properties.

From Campa, the forefathers of the Santals came to a place known as Tore Pokhori Baha Bandela. There they remained for a long time. Somehow or other, the Dekos also came with the people over there.

Here it is that the sojourners fixed their religious rites and ceremonials. We learn that they gathered under the shades of a "tope sarjòm" tree [a tree of the "sal" (*Shorea robusta*) variety] by the side of a spring and sitting on lotus-leaves, began a long discussion to fix the details of their customs. We hear that they decided to observe the ceremony of *Narta*, performed three or five days after child-birth, and other ceremonials connected with marriage and death.

[846
[196

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Here the Santals became the tenants of the king of Sikhàr but we hear that the Dekos seized their lands and property and drove them away. It is at Sikhàr that the Santals learnt how to observe the *Chatapòròb*[1] (one of Santal festivals). From Sikhàr some of the Santals came to Ṭuṇḍi near Dhanbad.

The Santals regard stability as the biggest of their tribal problems. Their forefathers exhorted upon them not to cross the river Ajoy, but they had to go against their wishes for the sake of bread. And in course of time they have found themselves in the Santal Parganas. With a characteristic naivetè, the Santals say that like the caterpillars

But the people would not change their religion, so they left their chief to rule over the Hindus, and wandered on to the Santal Parganas where they are settled now."

People of India, App. VIII, pages clviii-clix. Risley has some reflections on the origin of the name "Santal." He says that according to Mr. Skrefsrud it is a corruption from "Saontar" and was adopted by them after their sojourn for several generations in the country about Saont in Midnapur. Before they went to Saont they were said to have been called Kharwar, the root of which, *khar* is a variant of *hòṛ*, 'man', the name which all Santals use among themselves. Col. Dalton expressed a doubt whether the name of the place may not have been taken from the tribe, "a doubt strengthened by the discovery of a small tribe of Saonts in Surguja and Keonjhar." Risley does not think the point of importance as the Santal always now calls himself "mañjhi."

1. Chata-pòròb = Observed in Mayurbhanj on the 12th day (Dwadasi) before the Bhadra Purnima (full-moon in the month of Bhadra, Aug-Sept).

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

bunch of "sal" flowers, there a village-group sitting at a feast of rice and rice-beer. We were also invited to examine some more wall-paintings, walls which were proud to bear representations of steam-engines and aero-planes, and marking our reluctance to be so near modernism, our Santal friends expressed profound surprise.

The yard is scrupulously clean, and, to translate a Bengali saying, "You might pick vermilion if some dropped upon it." There is sometimes the finish of a cement but generally everything is plastered over with mud and cow-dung. Jutting out into the lane are the pig-styes and poultry-yard. The room at the entrance is the "Gohal" (*cattle-shed*). Almost invariably a stench will repel one's olfactory nerves, but then one must not forget that the Santals like the Hindus almost worship the cows; and the first item in their annual Harvest Home is the "Gohal puja," when the cows are anointed with vermilion and adored as their best earthly possession. There, one will find the oil-press and the rice-husking "dheñki." In the houses of the more affluent, a separate outer house can be found which gives the combined service of a kitchen and poultry-yard. Drinking-water drawn from the neighbouring springs is stored in earthen pitchers, about two cubits and a half in height, and kept in a conspicuous place.

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

(2) A woman and her husband's elder brothers, or husband's father and uncles; and a man and his wife's elder sisters or elder cousin-sisters, and wife's mother and aunt. 582

(3) Non-agnates excluding cross-cousins and (2) above.

Roughly speaking, a Santal may marry into group (3) but not into groups (1) and (2).

Added to these there are the restrictions based on traditional enmity as between the clans *Tuḍus* and *Besras* and *Kiskus* and *Màrṇḍis* and *vice versa*, marriages between whom are prohibited according to custom. [614]

Relationship taboos

Added to the food and sex-taboos, the Santals have some tabooed relations between whom not only marriage or sexual union must be avoided, but even their close contact is considered as a sin. Thus a husband's elder brother is a taboo to a Santal woman; she cannot even touch him. Wife's elder sister falls within the list; and we learn that during the general sprinkling of water after the *Baha* (flower festival), one cannot throw water on such relations. And Bengali Hindus may learn with some amusement that their joking relations, as between a bride's father and the bridegroom's mother, is transformed 607 [796] 602

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Relationship by courtesy

572
796

i. Flower friendship

Santal girls enter into various artificial relationship with their friends and address them with the endearing names of many flowers and leaves. At some places, such friendships are called *Phul Patao* which follows a regular ceremony, when two girls of the same mental, if not chronological age, pledge themselves to a friendship till death does them part. The main events of such ceremonies consist in mutual presents of clothes, and merry feasts. The final knot is tied when the two friends stick a particular flower in the hair of each other. Henceforth the friends will address each other by their flower-names e.g., *Akar Baba* (a flower of a plant found in moist places, *Limnophila*, Roxburghiana, G. Don), *Keya phul* (a flower), *Karam phul*, *Karam Dàr* (the branch of a Karam tree), instead of their own names. Such friendships, very common in Bengal, have their prototypes among the Santals, for, we hear, they have such names for friends as *Gònga Jal* (the water of the Ganges). Enquiries revealed that men rarely enter into such ties and they are more common among the women-folk, who, sometimes even choose such friends from non-Santals.

572
796
551

572

ii. Between neighbours

576

A variant of such relationship, called *Nata*, is sometimes adopted between neighbours to pay

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

576 sufficient respect to superiors or to show a corresponding affection to juniors, as would be proper in a common fraternity in the clan. Thus a younger man addresses an elder as 'uncle' and a younger girl will choose to call a senior woman as 'elder sister.'

[601]

iii. Between mothers

572 An interesting tie is knit by Santal society between the mothers of an equal number of children. Ceremonials are gone through to establish such forms of friendship, called *Sàika*, when presents are mutually exchanged and each of the friends treats some guests at feasts as a mark of the occasion.

[596] [43] [594]

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

In some areas, as in the sadar sub-division of Mayurbhanj, there is an interesting variation in the custom requiring both the complainant and accused to pay jointly for the feast of the judges, in the proportion of ten annas for the accused and six annas for the complainant in the rupee. Generally the "pañc" themselves eat the dinner; the public take no part in it. The contending parties then depart after a cordial mutual *johar* (salutation). In frivolous cases, the complainant has got to pay a fine himself. So we see that the Headman is not the sole repository of law in the eye of tribal jurisprudence to settle disputes; he must consult the "*Mònɲèn* hòɽ" to arrive at a decision.

The Headman with the assembly decides all matters of a socio-religious, legal and quasi-legal nature of the village. They are the fountain-heads of justice and custodians of Santal customs and manners, the first court of law both civil and criminal, for the Santal is generally averse to litigation in legally constituted courts, and prefers the arbitration of his village-elders.

To go into details, the Headman with his assembly will raise subscriptions for the public festivals like the December Harvest-Home, for religious feasts, and for offering libations to the deities of serious epidemics affecting the tribe. In all cases of marriage and funerals, the Headman and his advisory body must attend. Such ceremonies without them are unthinkable to the Santal.

3s Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Supreme Court of the Santals

224
634
692
[196]

According to immemorial custom, the Santals join together in an annual hunt (*Lò bir sendra*) on the conclusion of the spring flower-festival, when opportunity is taken to discuss various questions affecting the social and religious problems of the tribe, and to decide the reference cases from the decisions of the *Desh-Pròdhans*.

Here grave social offences necessitating social excommunication and ostracism (*Bitlahà*), (as we shall see in detail very soon) constitute subjects of grave deliberation by the tribe. Such meetings are convened by the circulation of a mysterious notice by means of a knot tied to a rope as in Mayurbhanj, or a branch of *Sal* tree carried from *hat* (market) to *hat* (as in Santal Parganas). About the constitution of this privy-council, Dr. Campbell opines that a person, *Dihri* (the superintendent of the hunt), is also the president of the court which assembles in the evening, but all that our enquiries revealed in Mayurbhanj was that the Pargana, the Desh-Pròdhans of the tribe assisted by the elders called Desh-Panchayet, jointly deliberate together before declaring their verdict.

[211]
[184]
[202]
[114]

This ancient institution, called in Santal lore *Sendra bir bichar* (a trial during a hunt at a forest) is almost extinct in Mayurbhanj, as wild games are protected by the State and no question of a tribal hunt

[184]
[178]

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

decided. The penalty for non-observance of this law is that they would be socially ostracised themselves. 684 622 692

The venue of the final trial rests on the tribal chiefs and various other officials of the tribe who assemble together during their general hunting season in the month of Santal *Pata Cando* (swinging festival known as Còròk) At this big Santal assembly, the case is reopened and the parties are asked to adduce evidence in support of their case. If, however, the accused pleads guilty, there is an end of the matter, and he or she, as the case may be, is fined or ostracised. If the fine is not paid within the date fixed, ostracism takes place in lieu of fine. [623] [224] [796]

When the parties are found guilty by the assembly, the Headman, who took cognisance of the offence initially, gets his credit, but if the evidence shows that the accused persons are not guilty, he is himself seriously punished.

When a verdict of guilt is passed, a general decree of excommunication is issued and a date is fixed for the ceremony. The date and place of *Bitlabà* is communicated through the entire tribe by means of a branch of a *Sal*-tree conveyed on the shoulders of a Santal from one village to another, from one market-place to another; outside their pale few know the significance of this mysterious notice. 684 [202] [211]

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

[P.186]

CHAPTER VII

FROM BIRTH TO DEATH

121 If at any moment mankind has thought and felt that there must be "more things in heaven and earth" than dreamt of by one's philosophy, it is at the cross roads of life, such as births, marriages and deaths. Whence comes this life, by what ceremonials will the married couple's life progress to their mutual well-being and, as members of the big human society, by what processes can we on earth ensure the peace, if not the happiness, of the departed spirit? These are questions that have deeply affected human thought, civilized or uncivilized. It is to tackle these problems that the Santals have recourse to elaborate ceremonials, to bring luck to them, and to propitiate their gods and goddesses, so that the malevolent powers may be shorn of their malign influence and the benevolent may protect them.

121
771
782
796

In the next few pages, we propose to deal with the ceremonies as observed by the Santals to ward off unknown dangers, and to feel at ease that something has been done to propitiate the deities.

844 *Birth*

When a baby is coming to a Santal family, no new shed is erected as a lying-in room, but any

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

CHAPTER VIII

THE CYCLE OF SANTAL FESTIVALS

The Santals have a number of religious and semi-religious festivals. It seems as if the very heart of the trible beats in unison with the advent of these tribal events, for it is here that the Santal plunges into his primitive herd-life to worship the tribal deities, to sing the advent of the agricultural season, to make merry over a bumper crop and to ward off by magic, the pests that hinder the sweet and even flow of their common life.

In this, they do not distinguish much between the Hindu and the Santal festivals. One sees huge Santal rallies during the *Durga Puja* and the *Kali Puja* of the Hindus, and we shall see in detail how they join in the Hindu *Còròk Puja* (Hook-swinging festival) and have a version of the festival of their own. In course of the following pages, we propose to discuss the typical Santal festivals as we observed in the Santal Parganas, noting side by side the variations from the customary practices at Mayurbhanj, beginning our survey from the month of Baisakh and ending with Chaitra.[1]

---

1. With acknowledgements to Mr. R. Kisku Rapaz and *Hòpkorèn Mare Hapramko Reak' Katha.*

Bi Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

Eròk' Sim (June)

796 [243] The first agricultural festival of the tribe, *Eròk' Sim*, is connected with the sowing of paddy seeds in June.

796 782 It begins with each house-holder subscribing fowls which are sacrificed by the *Naeke* (village priest) at the *Jahèrthan* (Holy Grove) in honour of Maraṅ Buru, Jahèr era, Mòṇṛènko, Pargana, Gosane era and Mañjhi Haṛam, one for each. A speciality is that the Boundary Deity is offered a black fowl, while the remaining ones are sacrificed to the deities presiding over the adjacent quarters of the boundary. The priest then utters the following incantation:—

[539] "We salute you, Creator (Bapu Ṭhàkur), Jahèr era, Maraṅ Buru and others. In the name of the sowing festival, we are offering sacrifice unto you so that we may sow in one quarter and in twelve quarters these may flourish in a bumper crop. Let the wind bring rains. Let rains shower in profusion. Let no diseases visit the villages such as colic pain, head-ache, and bowel-complaints. Convey these diseases away in golden water-carrying apparatus, bound with golden chains, elsewhere, from the direct harm of the tribe. Let our cattle increase in number. Protect them from the attacks of wild animals, when they will frequent the jungles. Protect our hunting-dogs."

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

Thereafter, a special dish is cooked with meat and rice boiled together. All the Santals then dine at the *Jahèrthan*. But the meat of the fowls offered to Jahèr era and Mòntrènko can be eaten by the Nacke (priest) alone.

On the second and third days of the festival, each house-holder sacrifices fowls to Abge Boṅga (the god of the Santal males), Oṛak' Boṅga (the Household deity), the Patriarchs of the tribe and Maraṅ Buru (the Chief Presiding Deity). Songs and dances *en masse* conclude the *Eròk' Sim*, the June sowing festival.

Eròk' Sim, (mentioned also by Dr. Campbell and Risley) is observed all over by the Santals; but at Mayurbhanj, it passes under the more Hinduised name of *Asharia*.

Hàriàṛ Simko (July)[1]

The month of July sees the celebration of the *Hàriàṛ Simko*, when thanks are offered to the gods as the paddy appears green and there are indications of a good crop. A peculiar feature of the ceremonials is that the village deities alone are worshipped on this occasion, but the prayers offered are

1. This is the approximate time for this festival in the Santal Parganas. Risley is, however, disposed to place the *Hàriàṛ Sim* (the feast of the sprouting rice, as he calls it) in September-October (Bhadra).

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 [782] almost identical to the *Erok' Sim*, the June sowing festival.

[114] [184] That this is an essential Santal festival is corroborated both by Risley and Dr. Campbell, but the Mayurbhanj Santals do not seem to observe it any longer.

796 243 782 *Iṛi Gundli Nànwàni* (The Millet Festival—August)

This festival is connected with the offering of the first fruits of millet (Iṛi, *Panicum milleceum* ; Gundli, *Panicum frumentaceum*) to the tribal gods of the Santals.

796 793 243 782 The essentials of the festival are that the *Nacke* (priest) after a purificatory ablution goes to the field of a *raiyat* (tenant) where the crop has ripened and harvests as much as he can. Then he goes to the *Jahèrthan*, cleanses it with cow-dung and offers the corn to all the gods of the Holy Grove viz. Jahèr era, Mòṇṛènko, Maraṅ Hòṛ, Gosa*ne* era and Pargana. Next he spills milk and utters the hymn:—

[539] 'We salute you Creator (Bapu Ṭhàkur) and Jahèr era. We offer you the first-fruits of our corn. We shall eat these, but let us have no bowel-complaints or head-ache."

The priest then returns to the village and going to the shrine in the Headman's house offers

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS
MAYURBHANJ

the new corn with a similar prayer. The remainder of the millet, he takes home for himself.

The Millet Festival, called *Muchri*, exists in all its details in Mayurbhanj and is observed by the Santals there.

Gamah Purnima (August)

Side by side with these harvest-festivals, the Santals of Mayurbhanj observe *Gamah Purnima* on the full-moon of *Sravan* (August), when cows are fed with salt, *mohua* flowers, rice, the corrosive *bhela* fruit and a grass called *mutha*, their horns being copiously rubbed with oil. Thereafter, men and women dance round a Karam (*Adina Cordifolia*) branch, planted at the *akhra* (place for dance), a special *Karam* dance, and on the conclusion immerse it in water. Ancestors are also propitiated with offerings of rice-beer. The Santals observe the festival along with some of the Hindus. All wear new clothes and indulge in feasts and drinks, not forgetting to feed Brahmins and Vaishnavas.

Karam Pòròb (September-October)

This is a festival observed in September-October. The males of the village go after nightfall and cut a branch of a *Karam* tree (*Adina Cordifolia*,) which they fix in the village lane (*kulhi*) and round which the young people dance till morning, when the Karam branch is thrown into a tank.

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS
MAYURBHANJ

796 [782] *Karam* branch is thrown into a tank. No sacrifices are offered, but a libation of liquor is poured out to the manes of the village-chief and to *Maraṅ Buru*.[1]

796 184 Although at first sight, it appears similar to the Mayurbhanj *Gamah-Purnima*, it is not so. In Mayurbhanj, the *Karam puja* is performed for the sake of amusement and welfare of the villagers during the *Gamah Purnima* or the *Sohrae*, as we shall see later. The *Karam Pòròb* may not be performed by the Mayurbhanj Santals if they do not like it and no harm to the villagers is thought to result from its non-performance. This is an extra festival in Mayurbhanj. But it should be noted that there are some who worship the *Karam Boṅga* and perform the *pòròb* as a hereditary practice. But although it is in existence in Mayurbhanj, the festival is observed only occasionally.

Ianthaṛ (*November*)

796 [782] [793] On the occasion of the celebration of the *Ianthaṛ* in November, the villagers subscribe towards a hog or a ram in honour of the tribal deity, *Ianthaṛ*; and it is sacrificed before the *Parganathan* (the shrine of the village deity, *Pargana*) by a special priest called *Kuḍàm Naeke*. The special feature of the festival

1. Dr. Campbell, *Santali to English Dictionary*, page 318.

Jt Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS
MAYURBHANJ

The special feature of the festival is that articles for worship are supplied by the priest himself, and only the male members of the tribe are allowed to eat the meat of the animals sacrificed. The priest then prays to the god *Ianthar* with the following incantations:—

We salute thee Father Creator *Pargana*.
We offer you all these in the name of *Ianthar*;
We pray that whatever we may eat, we may digest.
Let there be no diseases like headache, diarrhoea and bowel-complaints.
And bless our crop in the field, and grain in the barn.
Protect them from rats and other pestilence.

Ianthar (called by Risley *Ianthar puja*) is in effect the offering of the first fruit of low-land paddy, as *Iri Gundli* is of millets. Another name for the festival is *Baibar Horo* Nanwàni.

In course of our enquiries in Mayurbhanj, many Santals stated that this festival passes under the name of *Maamane*[1] there, as was very clear from the fact

1. One wonders if the name is Mak' *Mònṛén* in disguise. It is stated by Dr. Campbell to be a festival observed by the Santals after five years or so when the god "Mónṛènko" is propitiated with the sacrifice of a white goat. The account in the District Gazeteer of the Santal Parganas considers it "an occasional sacrifice performed as the result of a vow made at a time of great distress", when sacrifices are made to all the national *bongas* in the *Jabérthan*.

Sr Mukherjee O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

796 [243] that it is celebrated with the reaping of moist-land rice, and where there is no such corn to be harvested, there is no function. The date of this public ceremony is fixed in *Agrahayan* (Nov.—Dec.) by the "Móṇṛèn hòṛ" (the tribal assembly), when the village-priest procures a winnowing fan, vermilion, new earthen-pots and *mithi* (a kind of spice).

The Mayurbhanj festival, observed for two days, has *Um Naṛka* (the day of purification) as the first item. Early in the morning, the unmarried boys [857] [794] of the tribe repair and clean the small hut for Jahèr era at the Holy Grove (Jahèrthan), after fasting for a day. Towards evening, the villagers assemble at the house of the *Naeke* (village-priest) and old men and women invoke Maraṅ Buru, Jahèr era, Mòṇṛènko, Maraṅ Mañjhi Haṛam and Hudiṅ Mañjhi Haṛam with proper songs. To ensure the presence of the deities, a dance is arranged at the Holy Grove; and if it is not possible, five men, being the number of the gods, rub a plantain with sun-dried rice when they are sure to respond to the tribal prayer. Next they sit on a mat. The priest gives them sun-dried rice which they rub in the winnowing fan. They 796 now show signs of frenzy (*Ibupar*). They are asked 787 their names by the priest and in a trance they name the five gods, one after another. Then the actor-deities are invoked and questioned so that the tribe may reap paddy in plenty, and how the

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

pestilence and epidemics affecting the Santals may be got rid of; and they reply in their hypnotic spell, suggesting ways out of the problems. On the conclusion the village-priest asks the Santals impersonating the deities to leave the grove.

On the morning of the second day, called *Sardi*, the *Godet* collects rice and chicken from all the houses. If a dance is decided upon, men and women go to the *Jahérthan* (Holy Grove), dancing and singing all the way with cymbal and kettle-drum accompaniments with the *Naeke* (priest) at the head, carrying the things procured by him on the previous day together with a pot of rice-beer. Closely following the priest, goes a bachelor youth with an earthen pitcher. Thus they reach the Holy Grove and clean the spot with cow-dung. Now the priest reaps some paddy from a field he chooses, and offers them with the prayers we have noted while describing *Janthar* festival in the other Santal areas. Fowls are sacrificed to the five gods, and the Boundary deity is propitiated by the priest at a separate place with offerings of rice-beer. All these over, the women return home. Men stay on and prepare the tribal dinner which they eat by the afternoon. The priest himself cooks near the shrine of Jahèr era. He offers the meal to the five deities of the grove and eats the lot himself.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 Meanwhile, the whole village is agog with music and folk-songs of the women who have returned already. The men now return to the village by evening, with the priest at the head, dancing and singing as they go.

Sohrae, the Winter Harvest Home

The Santals of the Santal Parganas have a picturesque festival to celebrate the *Sohrae*, their Winter Harvest Home, the biggest annual event of their tribal life. This is a common day of thanksgiving to the gods as rain, the sun and fair weather have contributed to a bumper crop. Known as *Bandhna*, in common parlance, this picturesque festival has no specified date in the tribal calendar. It is begun at suitable dates for each village. Sometimes dates are also fixed by the Deputy Commissioner of the Santal Parganas and the Excise Department to regulate them. But there is this reservation, that the festival must conclude before the last day of the Bengali month, *Pous* (mid-January).

[783] The festival starts with an initial purification ceremony (*Um*), when the members of the tribe cleanse themselves with a ceremonial ablution. Houses and court-yards also are scrupulously made free from dirt.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 •
539

The following is a folk-song sung on the field on the first day of *Sohrae*, with water near about:—

Kò nàhi sirijala
Boma prithima ho;
Kò nàhi sirijala
Gàia jo yo re;
Kò nàhi sirijala
Gàia jo.

Ṭhàkuràhi*n* sirijala
Boma prithima ho;
Ṭhàkurahi*n* sirijala
Gàia jo yo re;
Ṭhàkuràhi*n* sirijala
Gàia jo.

Ṭirmuṭi sirijala
Kànure Gowala;
Purubàhi*n* ḍaharàli
Gàia jo yo re;
Purubàhin ḍaharali
Gàia jo.

Kaha*n* bàbu hèralòṅ
Ḍaṇḍa ka bàsi ho;
Kaha*n* bàbu hèralio
Gàia jo yo re;
Kaha*n* bàbu hèralio
Gàia jo.

St Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796
539

Baṭèhin hèralòñ
Ḍaṇḍa ka bàsi ho;
Gòṭèhin hèralio
Gàia jo yo re;
Gòṭèhin hèralio
Gàia jo.

The sense of the above folk-song may thus be rendered in English:—

Who has created this world?
Who has created the cattle?
Ṭhàkur (God) has created this world.
Ṭhàkur has created the cattle.
The hawk created Kanu Gowala,
He used to feed cows in the east.
Well, my son! (Kanu) where have you lost your flute which you always keep in your loin?

Kanu replies:—

I have lost my flute in yonder field;
I have lost my cattle in yonder pasture.

769
526
23

Thereafter, the Santals take a meal and assemble at the *Jabèrthan*, where one of the most interesting sports is witnessed. The village-elders sit. The cow-boys of the tribe are summoned before them and asked to make their cows walk on a particular spot on which eggs have been placed. The cow-boy, who can make his cow break the egg or even smell it, is called the "Lucky Boy" by the applause

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

of the audience. The feet of the successful cow are then ceremonially washed.[1]

The second day is devoted to the preparation of food for the different tribal gods, in whose honour animals like fowls, goats and pigs are sacrificed. Ancestor-spirits are also worshipped and their memory honoured and offerings and libations made to them at home by heads of families. The evening is spent in community feasts on a large scale with drinks of rice-beer offered to the gods and thereafter drunk by the members of the tribe.

The climax of the ceremonials reaches with the worship of cows (*Gohal Puja*). When all are sleeping, young men of the tribe keep vigil and go from place to place to awaken the cows, beginning with the Headman's house, playing on pipes and kettle-drums.

The following is a song sung on the occasion: —

Gàini còlilo siribinda bònè ho,
Màhisini carae gaṅga para jo yo re,
Màhisini carae gaṅga para jo.

---

1 E. G. Man, in his *Sonthalia and the Sonthals* (p. 57) in this connection refers to the Egyptian myth of the "Bull and the Egg." The ceremony consists in newly laid hen's eggs being placed on the village lane and oxen driven past, and the one who stoops to smell the egg is held in high estimation for the year. "I believe," says Man, "the Egyptian mythology states that the earth came out of an egg which the bull broke."

St Mukherjee O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1937) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796
539
231

Gàini awae adha berena ḍubayete,
Màhisini awae adha rata jo yo re,
Màhisini awae adha rata jo.

Kòn siñge debo telare sindura,
Kòn pithe debo dhubi dhana jo yo re,
Kòn pithe debo dhubi dhana jo.

The sense of the above may be rendered as follows:—

The cows have gone to Sree Brindaban.
The buffaloes are grazing on the bank of the Ganges, on the other side, look there!
The buffaloes are grazing on the banks of the Ganges, on the other side.
The cows are returning at sun-set.
The buffaloes return home at mid-night,
The buffaloes return home at mid-night.
On which horn shall I apply oil and vermilion?,
Oh! on whose back shall I place grass with paddy?,
On whose back shall I place grass with paddy?,

796
231

On the other hand, the maidens form a batch. They deck their hair with flowers and entwine their arms with their sisters. Thus they march in a procession to the tribal Headman's (*Pròdhan*) house, where, with fresh paddy, grass and lamps, they

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

sing special songs round the cattle and thus visit all the cow-sheds of the village. Cattle are anointed with oil and daubed with vermilion, and a share of rice-beer given to each.

796
231

We give below a standard folk-song sung on the occasion :—

796
539
231

Hate lela arwa cal
Gocha lela pakal pan
Càli bela àmki devi
Gàiye cumbài.

Eka cumbài cumbài lagal
Dui cumbài barare
Pàri gela sirà barda
Akeka lo.

Kae barda kanda sè
Kae barda khèja sè
Dèbore putà
Rila malare pan.

Dhire calae dhire calae
Bàburè barada
Kaise tò kambe sindur.

It is very difficult to translate the above to bring out its sense. All that we gather is that it appears that the worshippers have taken sun-dried rice in their hands. The sun has gone down. The cows

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 539 23 are kissed. The horned bullock falls down. They are in a puzzle as to which bullock they will give the *pan* (perhaps water). Next they feel that the bullock is slowly going. How can vermilion be applied (while in motion) ?

On that night, the *kulbis* (village-lanes) resound with various other songs sung by women. The meaning of these orthodox songs is somewhat obscure. We give below a song sung by those who possess female-buffaloes in their cattle-shed : —

Tòkòerèn gàiko ho, gàiko borot' borot' ;
Tòkòerèn bitkil ho, bitkil ñàhum dàrum.

Phalnarèn gàiko, gàiko borot' borot'
Phalnarèn bitkil, bitkil ñàhum dàrum.

Bitkil jaṅga ho, dama domo,
Huhàṛ jaṅga ho, tilmàṅ talmaṅ.

Neko dòko calaoen siñegòr bire,
Neko dòko calaoen manegòr bire.

Dotè amka ho, nàcur leko,
Dotè amka ho, bihur leko.

Siñègòr birerè kule gò menac,
Manègòr birerè tàrube hòpòn.

Neko dòko nàtiña car cur carèc'
Rehḍa hasa ho jarapè lòyòṅ.

31 Mukherjea Q. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 539 23

The bare idea of the above folk-song may thus be given in English:

Who has got so many cows which look bright and beautiful ?,
Who has got so many female buffaloes black and bulky ?,
So and so's cows look bright and beautiful.
So and so has female buffaloes black and bulky.
The legs of the female buffaloes are very plump,
But green pigeon's feet are very light and soft.
These buffaloes went to the forest of Siñ,
These green pigeons went to the forest of Man.[1]
Well, young men, go and bring them (female buffaloes) back from forests ;
O, young men go and bring (them).

The young man replies: —

In the forest of Siñ, there is a lion ;
In the Man forest there is a small tiger.
These buffaloes graze and eat this and that,
And drink saline water and mud from springs.

796 231

An interesting feature of this day is the fixing of posts all over the village upto the Headman's house in the morning. After midday meals cows and buffaloes are tied to these posts with strings. The feet of these animals are then washed and their

1 There are frequent references to the forests of "Siñ" and "Man" in Santal legends.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS
MAYURBHANJ

796 [231] horns decorated with garlands and cakes made of treacle. The young sportsmen of the village now come in a body and begin poking these animals and dance round them, all the while trying to snatch away the cakes. This "War-dance" being over, [526] the villagers assemble at the Headman's house and engage in a picturesque competition in playing with bamboo-staff and shields.

Next follows *Hako Katkòm*, meaning the day for catching fish and crabs. It is the religious duty of all Santals to go out hunting on this day and if they cannot find anything else, they must at least kill fish or crabs.

[574] Now the ceremonials draw to a close ; and on a special day called *Jale*, the members of the tribe visit from house to house and exchange greetings.

796 526 A whole week of festivities comes to a close with *Bejha*, (to shoot at a target) a day of sports. There is a good deal of animation in the tribe and before a vast congregation *latbi* (bamboo-staff) play, shooting at a mark with arrows and measuring individual strength take place, those successful being cheered and conveyed to the Headman's house on the shoulders of their friends.

796 *Sobrae at Mayurbhanj*

In Mayurbhanj, the *Sobrae* is generally called as *Bundhna* or *Kali Puja*, and celebrated along with

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

the Hindu festival associated with the worship of the goddess *Kali*. The essential difference between this and the Santal Parganas festival, we have noted in the foregoing pages, is that there is no *Hako katkòm* (catching fish and crabs) and *lale* (the day of greetings) which concludes the function. Although there is bound to be some overlapping, we propose to deal with this in some detail, so that the reader can have some idea of the special features seen at Mayurbhanj.

On the morning of the first day, called *Um* or *Goṭh Puja*, the *Chatia* (an Oriya word for *Goḍet*) collects subscriptions of fowls and rice from all the villagers and heaps them in the house of the priest. The villagers soon assemble there. All ingredients for the worship, such as cow-dung, sun-dried rice, vermilion, *mithi* (a kind of spice), powdered rice (sun-dried) are placed in a winnowing-fan which the priest carries in his right hand, whereas, in his left he takes a pot of water. He is followed by a villager carrying a pot of rice-beer. With the priest at the head, a silent procession of the village arrives at the *goṭh* (field where the cows graze). Here a spot is selected by the priest and cleaned with cow-dung and water. Next, oblations are offered for the good of the corn, cattle and for the peaceful celebration of *Sohrae*. The Headman, thereafter, addresses the gathering requesting the tribe to be prepared

Sr Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

796 for a period in which offences are to be connived at, as there is bound to be a good deal of drunkenness.

[782] On the conclusion of the preliminary *puja* at about ten a.m., the rice, fowls and rice-beer already collected, are offered to *Maraṅ Buru* and other deities.

[793] Thereafter, these are cooked together by the villagers, while the *Naeke* (priest) prepares a separate dish with the heads of the fowls (because he is a pure and chaste person). Now, offering the dishes again to the gods like *Maraṅ Buru*, the *Naeke* leads the community feast and is followed by the tribe.

796 231 Towards evening, the cattle of the tribe are brought to the *Goṭh* and their horns rubbed with oil. They are then let loose near the spot where the tribe has eaten, and the man whose cow chances to eat the *sal*-leaf plate used by the *Naeke* (priest) is considered to be a very lucky one and endowed with the privilege of supplying a pot of *hàṇḍia* (rice-beer) for the next year's festival. He becomes the hero of the tribe, to be blest with good cattle and harvest, and is raised over the head and shown to the assembly. Eggs are also placed on *sal*-leaves; but cows are not made to walk upon them, as we saw in the Santal Parganas.

796 [533] [831] [786] [685] The nocturnal vigil at Mayurbhanj is practically the same as that during the night of *Gobal Puja*, the same songs are sung, but they add many of an erotic nature. But fruits and vegetables as gourds

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

and sweet potatoes must be stolen from the houses of the villagers to be eaten with the Headman's share of rice-beer, and no sin attaches to it as during the *Nòstò Chòndrò* of the Hindus. Such thefts are called *Jagarna* in Mayurbhanj. The object of the custom lies in the Santal belief that those who steal on such occasions will never be prosecuted on charges of theft, nor will such householders thus victimised be robbed by real thieves, a second time.

The second day in Mayurbhanj, is the day for *Sarḍi*, when *Gohal Puja* takes place. In the morning, an interesting dance is executed round a *Karam* branch which is brought by two bachelor youths and planted on the ground, cleansed with cow-dung by the maidens of the tribe. Old women circle round the tree with earthen lamps and offerings of sun-dried rice. This is closely followed by merry dance by the men and women of the tribe, in different groups.

With the noon, people offer fowls and pigs to *Kalimata*, the presiding deity of the cow-shed and to the ancestors ; and then ceremonially wash their agricultural implements as plough-shares and yokes, and anoint them with powdered rice and vermilion. Now it is time for meal, when, the animals sacrificed are eaten at home ; and this over, by evening, one will find the Santals *en masse* near the *akhra* (the village dancing yard) engaged in their songs and

Bi Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

796 dances round the *Karam* branch. The conclusion
796 of the dance sees a tug-of-war between the youths
526 and maidens of the tribe, for the latter won't allow the branch to be taken away for immersion by the former; and this trial of strength can only be avoided if the lopped branch can be stolen away from the vigilant eyes of the other sex. This tug-of-war is a pure amusement. There is no hidden meaning behind the custom.

796 At midnight, the villagers take a nocturnal
231 round near cow-sheds singing songs with musical accompaniments, with the object of kissing the cattle and thus adoring them.

The third day is devoted to sports with the cattle. Early in the morning the members of the tribe assemble at the house of the Headman with their drums and other musical instruments and make *biras* (a stack of paddy coiled together in a circle) according to the number of cattle in the Headman's cattle-shed and tack them to their horns. They get a bit frightened and are let loose amidst the din of drums, and as they rush out, men shower on them rice-beer and women stone them with eggs. As the cattle run on pell-mell, the last one is caught by an enterprising Santal, and its feet are washed with a good deal of ceremony.

796 Next, a punch is made of the Headman's rice-
273 beer with those of the other cattle-owners, and drunk
769 after offering it to the ancestor-spirits.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

after offering it to the ancestor-spirits. Thus stimulated, the tribe indulges in a water-carnival, when fluids of sun-dried rice are showered by the men and women on one another, amidst a great hilarity, as they parade up and down the *kulhi* (village-lane). 796 •

The afternoon witnesses *Khuṇṭau*, as seen in the Santal Parganas, when, mischievous cows and buffaloes are tied to posts and teased with treacle cakes. But an additional interest is provided at Mayurbhanj in the shape of a mask-dance when the Santals impersonate tigers, snakes and elephants. [231] [632] [535]

The programme terminates on the fourth day after a tribal dance from house to house ; and thereafter, the paddy from the *biṛas* prepared to decorate the cattle is stored, and rice-beer brewed from it is reserved to be drunk on a later occasion.

Mòkòr (Sakrat[1] Mid-January.)

The Santals of Mayurbhanj observe a ceremony on the last day of *Pous* (mid-January) along with

---

1 Dr. Campbell in his *Santali to English Dictionary*, while explaining *Sakrat Pòrŏb* says that it is a festival observed on the *last three days of the Hindu year*, (Italics are ours), making it, peasumably refer to an equivalent of Bengali *Chaitra Sankranti*. Most probably he is mistaken. Our version is also corroborated by Rev. Bodding who says, "Close upon Sohrae comes Sākrat which is held on the last day of the month of *Paus*." (Dt. Gazetteer, Santal Parganas, 1910, page 128). 796 114

St Mukherjea O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

796 [769] the Hindu festival prevalent on the day. This is also called *Sakrant puja* and performed on an elaborate scale at Mayurbhanj, when *chira* (flattened rice) and molasses are offered to the dead ancestors.

796 262 On the first day, called "Banuṇḍi," people catch fish and crab in the belief that if they can eat them on the day, they will be given a long lease of life. Tasteful cakes of meat, sun-dried rice-flour are prepared in all households ; and after baths, the Santals eat them with treacle and *til* (sesamum), [273] *chira* (flattened rice) being a compulsory item. Meanwhile, drinks of rice-beer go on.

796 [526] Towards evening, the people indulge in archery competition on a target placed on a plantain tree. The successful one is cheered by the tribe and conveyed to the Headman's residence with a great demonstration, where the tribe is entertained with rice-beer and fried-rice. He, who can maintain a uniform record for three consecutive years, is awarded a special prize by the Headman, amidst tribal songs and dances.

The conclusion of the festival sees a great deal [532] of mirth in all the houses. Puppet monkeys made [574] of straw are made to dance from house to house. People raise subscriptions for a tribal dinner and the country-side rings with merry music and laughter of a good time.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 •

Magh Sim[1] *(January-February)*

The month of *Magh* (Jan.-Feb.) is the end of the Santal year and it has got appropriate ceremonials with the cutting of jungle thatching grass. Servants are paid their wages and fresh contracts entered into. All village officials resign, *rayats* notify throwing up of lands and are reappointed amidst drinks of rice-beer[2]

[465]
[675]

Baba, the Santal 'Sal'-Blossom Festival.[3]

796
824

Towards the latter part of February, the Santals celebrate *Baba*, their *sal*-blossom season, an occasion for wholesale tribal rejoicing with sprinkling of water, its special songs and dances.

According to *Hòṛkoṛèn Mare Haṛamko Reak' Katha*, the Traditions and Institutions of the Santals, the aim of the festival is to celebrate the advent of Spring, which sees the efflorescence of their favourite *sal*, (Shorea Robusta), *pòlas* (Butea Frondosa), *mohua* (Bassia latifolia), *icak'* (Woodfordia Floribunda, Salib.) flowers. So long *Baba* is not over, no Santal will suck the honey of these flowers or eat them, nor will their women wear them in their hair.

1 Mayurbhanj Santals name it *Magh-Sim*, meaning a worship in the month of Magh, as distinct from *Mage-Sim* of the Muṇḍàs.

2 Ref. Risley, *People of India*, App. Viii. clxvi.

3 Quoted from the author's article in the *Modern Review*, May 1936.

[113]

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1932
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 will their women wear them in their hair. As distinguished from the *Sobrae*, the Harvest Home, which is a trifle Bacchanalian, this festival is purer in its observances.

796 783 778 The festival begins with a day of purification called *Um*, when the young men of the village assemble at the *Jabèrthan*, (the Holy-Grove) in the village, and build two huts. One of these huts is [776] reserved for the Santal deity, called Gosane era, the other is meant to be jointly shared by Jahèr era, the presiding deity of the grove, "Monṛènko", (the "Five", meaning the five presiding gods) and Maraṅ Buru, the chief presiding deity. The shrines thus built are then purified with cow-dung by the priest. All the young men of the village then bathe and purify themselves.

796 [793] [783] In the meantime, the *Naeke* (priest) cleanses a winnowing fan, a basket, a bow and arrow, a pick-axe, a broom-stick, a holy gong and a hunting-horn and daub them with oil and *mithi* (a kind of spice).

The evening comes. In the meantime, the [624] *Godet*, the orderly of the village Headman, has presented him (the priest) with three fowls. Three [787] young men now advance towards the priest's house, shaking their heads in a trance and impersonating Jahèr era, Maraṅ Buru and Gosane era respectively. Jahèr era then enters the priest's hut, puts on the bracelet, and putting the basket on his head, takes

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

up the broom-stick. Mòṇṛèṇko takes up the bow and arrow, while Maraṅ Buru, the pick-axe; and the actor-deities then run to the grove followed by the young men. Jahèr era then sweeps the shrine, while the two others supervise. 796 •

At night, they return from the grove. The priest, with piteous lamentations takes back the insignias the deities wore. All then sit on mats. The three actor-deities are then given a handful of rice each as propitiation, and questioned about the auguries. This is followed by a general incantation of the gods. [782] [787]

Next, the priest washes their feet beginning with Jahèr era. The deities themselves do so mutually, and the headman, the drummer, the *Kabi* (the singer), all participate in the ceremony. The balance of the water is then thrown on all, amidst general jumps and yells. The priest then asks for the water-pot, and makes Jahèr era, Maraṅ Buru and Mòṇṛèṇko sit on the mats, when they are dispossessed of their spirit life. They are then entertained with a meal of rice and drinks of *hàṇḍia* (rice-beer) along with the others present. But a peculiar thing is that the *Kabi* (the singer) is allowed a large share of the dinner and not allowed to return home.

Dances *en masse* with special songs for the Baha follow. Many of these are duets. One runs [535] [533]

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 533 [539] thus in the first few stanzas:—(*translated*).

Semi-chorus:

On the Pipul tree, the wood-pecker is twittering,
Under the banyan tree, the *gutrut* is singing.
Has the Spring arrived?,

Second semi-chorus answers:

[539] The seasons have changed, so the wood-pecker twitters;
The Spring has come back so the *gutrut* babbles.
The Spring has come back to us.

796 [526] The second day's programme, which includes the shooting at *sal*-flowers, is the most picturesque. Early in the morning, the priest's wife grinds flour. The Headman's orderly goes round the village gathering rice, salt and turmeric. All then go to the Holy Grove singing all the way. The priest carries a big basket containing a chain, bracelets, broom-stick, bows, arrows and horns; and a smaller one with rice, oil, vermilion, flour and pick-axe. [1178] A small holy-water pot is conveyed there by a bachelor youth.

Here, the actor-deities of the previous day are again inspired. They wear their traditional insignia and run to the jungles, followed by the young men. There, Mòṇṛèṇko shoots at the sprouting *sal*-flowers with an arrow, Maraṅ Buru climbs the tree and cuts

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

the branches with the flower, while Jahèr era plucks them in his basket. Then, they all return to the holy-grove, also gathering *mohua* (Bassia Latifolia) flowers on the way, where the priest receives them with a load of *sal*-flowers in a chequered napkin. The actor-deities are then enshrined in their respective huts. Fowls are sacrificed in their honour with a special incantation in honour of Baha and amidst songs and rejoicings, the priest offers the deities bunches of *sal* and *mohua* flowers. Then, after a mutual feet-washing ceremony, in which Jahèr era takes the lead, the balance of the water is sprinkled on them. Then there are shouts and yells when the deities are transformed into their real selves.

All then return to the village singing and dancing. The burden of these particular songs is that of an invitation to all the boys and the girls of the village to accept the special gift of a *sal*-flower from the priest, and to salute him in return. At night, the priest remains at the grove with his wife, who shares with him a special dish of a spotted fowl, cooked by her husband.

The third day, which symbolises the return home, is devoted to general feasting and merry-making. Some go to the *Jabèrthan* (grove), beat the kettle-drum and blow horns, indicating that the priest is returning home. All then tell one another, "Let us go and welcome the priest," and march to

St Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 the grove. A young man then takes on his head the basket, in which the *sal*-flowers have been so nicely piled by the priest, who himself carries a few flowers, the winnowing fan and the pot of water. The jar of holy water is, as before, conveyed by a bachelor.

As the Santals now advance towards their village, the maidens keep ready the ceremonial water-jug, seats of wood, and oil in a wooden box of a small size. The priest's feet are washed by the maidens of the first house. They are offered *sal*-flowers in return. The maidens salute the priest as he pours water on them. This is done in all the houses, till they reach the priest's, when water is poured on his roofs and a liberal offer of rice-beer is made to all present.

Now follows a water-festival on a wide scale. Water is sprinkled on all, as on the occasion of the "Holi" of the Hindus, with the difference that it is not coloured. Men and women, all join in this, except those prohibited by special degrees of relation-
[607] ship. For, it may be interesting to note, the Santal thinks that his younger brother's wife and his wife's elder sister deserve a great respect from him and so it is not thought proper to throw water on them. The festivities conclude with songs and dances in which the whole village joins, the merry-makers' procession starting from the priest's house and ending with the house of the Headman.

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

This interesting flower-festival is celebrated in Mayurbhanj under the name of "*Salui puja*", which also means a '*sal*-blossom festival'. But during our investigations, we observed certain differences from the customs of the Santal Parganas, we have noted just now. 796 • 184

In the first place, the *Goḍet* does not take three fowls to the priest on the evening of the first day at Mayurbhanj, but, we understand, the latter keeps them tied in his own house. Secondly, as regards the actor-deities, the Mayurbhanj Santals impersonate five of them and not three as in the Santal Parganas. The two additional ones are Marañ Mañjhi Haṛam and Hudiñ Mañjhi Haṛam. Thirdly, on the conclusion of the second day, the festival is not carried on to a third. But a general hunt called *Baha Baske Sendra* is arranged, when a leg of the animals hunted, is presented to the Headman, who in turn supplies a pot of *hàṇḍia* (rice-beer) to the hunters. Should no game be shot, the tribe will not rest content, for, they must kill a fowl even by force from the priest's house and make the ceremonial present to the Headman. At night, the tribe assemble near the priest's house, and unloose the string of the bow carried to the Holy Grove. The function concludes with a general drink of rice-beer at the priest's expense. [624] [793] [224]

St Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

Jòm Sim.

796
[782]

This is a festival in which offerings of sheep or goats are made to the Sun-god, *Siñ Boñga*. No definite time is fixed for the celebration of this sacrifice ; it may do if one performs it once in one's life-time, everything depending on the length of one's purse. Those who can afford it, generally perform the worship after every fifth year. It is not a public worship like the Flower-festival or the Harvest Home, as the village deities supposed to reside in the Holy Grove are not worshipped, nor do the Santals as a tribe join it. It is a worship restricted to a particular clan in groups. So when the *Màrṇḍis* perform *Jòm Sim puja*, it is they and they alone who take part in it and invitations issued to other clans can only include the daughters of *Màrṇḍis*, married in other clans and their children. The funds, of course, are subscribed by the members of the clan.

796
614

[115]

Jadabendra Mañjhi (a *Màrṇḍi*), an educated Santal of Mayurbhanj, working in the Secretariat there, thus gave us a description of the festival, soon after it was celebrated by his clan. He said that the *Màrṇḍis* according to custom perform this festival before the full-moon of *Falgun* (Feb.-March) or *Baisakh* (April-May) and not at any other time, a date being fixed by the clan in a meeting, and a goat castrated as a preparation for the festival.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

On the first day called *Um Narka* (purification), the members of the clan clean their houses, wash clothes and eat nothing except rice and *biri* (a pulse). Thereafter, some other goats are also castrated and the place of sacrifice is made clean and a pot of holy water placed there. 796 614 783

On this day the clan offers *pujas* to two gods whose names our informant did not disclose as a clan secret, but added that *Brahma* and *Ganesh* of the Hindus are the nearest equivalent to the deities, who are impersonated by two Santals after falling in a trance. They are solemnly asked their names and on their answer, they are shown a goat and a ram to be offered to them the next day, for their approval. As they express their satisfaction, they are prayed to resume their normal selves. 796 614 787

Before sun-rise on the second day called *Sàrdi*, the clan assembles at the place of sacrifice and offers the goat to the Santal equivalent of *Ganesh* and the ram to *Brahma*. Two ancestors are also invoked with offerings of fowl, the spotted ones being meant for the ancestors on the mother's side, while the red ones for those on the father's side. *Marañ Burn* (the chief presiding deity) gets a white fowl. The peculiarity of the sacrifice is that the ram, goat and the white fowl are sacrificed by being killed by one stroke as is done by the Hindus, whereas, the spotted and red fowls are slowly cut. Prayers are 796 614 782 [769]

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 614 [782] [252] then offered to the gods to protect the clan from earthly maladies, bowel-complaints being specially named as a dreaded disease. The meat, thereafter, is cooked with salt and water. The *Màrṇḍis* must eat the heads of the animals sacrificed and the rest goes to the share of the invited.

The *Baskes*, when questioned, said that they need not like *Màrṇḍis* start the festival before sunrise; any time before noon suits their clan calendar. [782] [252] Their sacrificial meat is cooked with turmeric, spices and salt, and their gods are similiar to those of the *Màrṇḍis*.

796 *Pata* (Santal *Còròk* in mid-April).

[177] We have seen from the foregoing that the Santals, in addition to their orthodox festivals, associate themselves with the various Hindu ceremonials like the *Durga Puja*, *Kali Puja* and others. [174] From the evidence at our disposal, one cannot be sure as to when they began their association, but as one looks to the *Pata*, the Santal version of Hindu *Còròk*, (Hook-swinging festival) it seems to be pretty old. In the chapter on *Bitlàhà* or Santal social ostracism, we noticed that the final trial of the offenders takes place on *Pata cando*, meaning the month of *Còròk*, and the orthodox meaning of the word *Pata* is stated to be "a festival in honour of *Mahadeo*."

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 184 787 798

The customary practices, in connection with the *Pata*, vary in different areas. There are some in the Santal Parganas who show signs of supposed spirit-possession (the Santal *jhupar*) with the arrival of the festival. They go here and there like Tagore's maniac (*'khepa'*) in eternal search for the "touch-stone." They dive in a pond, ransack the forests, search the hills, and at last coming upon a stone shout, "Eureka" ("We have found."). And the admiring audience see that they have unearthed a stone, which they all acclaim as the symbol of *Mahadeo*. These people, called *Bhòktas*, then run to the conveners of the Hindu festival *Còròk* and prevail upon them to worship the images ceremonially, and if listened to, they are permitted to join with the devotees and take part in the ceremonials.

796 184 794 [782]

There are others who arrange their own festivals. Such people go begging from house to house for three days previous, and with the proceeds, they buy milk. Then on the eve of the *Pata*, they assemble at a field, where the *Bhòktas* (devotees) erect a hut-temple with subscriptions collected from the tribe; and offer milk, rice and *ghee* to the deity *Mahadeo* with a good deal of ceremony, a goat being sacrificed in a place away from the improvised temple. The ceremonials conclude with special songs and dances in which the Santals take part with a great deal of gusto.

Si Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796
533

The folk-songs sung on the occasion have an extraordinary naïvèté of their own, and if we choose to note some of them here, it is because they will throw a flood of light on the observance of the festival. One of the songs, sung in the festival,

796
533
539

would seem to show that *Pata* was formerly celebrated in water. This verse is as follows:—

Pàhil pàhilko patakèda dak'
Talare khuṇṭi latarrè,
Radha còṛokko nàcurena.

Translation:—

In the first Pata festival, a post was fixed in the water. Under it a *Radha Còròk* (a swinging wheel) began to swing round.

Another song sings of the swinging wheel and cracks a joke about the *Bhóktas*, the devotees who are possessed by the spirit of *Pata-Boṅga* (the deity of Pata), and act their parts during the festival as it they were the gods themselves:,

Barohat ḍaṅ[1] dada terohat khuṇṭi,
Ḍaṅ upòr bhòktago rahigel,
Bhòkta pujai mahasòy.

Translation:—

The *ḍaṅ* is twelve cubits long,
Thirteen cubits the post,

---

1 The *ḍaṅ* is a big plank on which the devotees swing during the Hook-swinging festival.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

On the *dan* swings along,
(Sir) Bhòkta merrily tossed.

The joy of Santalia during such festivals knows no bounds. Large batches of men and women go from place to place. The men play on pipes. The women decorate their hair with beautiful flowers and entwine their arms round one another's shoulders. The kettle-drums, the cymbals and the wine, produce an atmosphere in which these simple people forget their mundane existence in the pursuit of their primitive practices and observances. The *joie de vivre* is reflected in the following song in which a woman requests her sister to accompany her to witness the *Pata* festival for three days to their heart's content.[1]

Cetan disòmrè pè maha jagròn pata hoyok' ;
Dara ge didi ge sòngè jaibò,
Pè maha jagròn sòbay jaybò.

Translation :—

In the uplands for three days they keep awake
for the Pata ;
O sister, do wait for me, I shall go with you ;
For three nights they keep awake ; we all
shall go.

1 Quoted and adapted from the author's article "Santal Folk-Poetry" published in the *New Review*, September, 1936.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 785 [56] Before we conclude, it may be interesting for the reader to have some idea of the original Hook-swinging festival, which has been declared now a criminal act by legislation, because of danger to human lives. Man in his *Sonthalia and the Sonthals*, gives a description which shows how the hooks for suspending the devotee were "inserted in the muscles of his back, who was generally an inebriated oracle. He was then suspended in mid-air and swung round, apparently hanging by the hooks. I have, however, seen a good many of these revolving martyrs, and although to a casual observer it appears very dreadful to behold a man thus pendant, it is not quite so bad so as it seems, for his friends took the precaution to tie a girth of strong cloth round the victim's body, in such a manner that his weight rests upon the cloth rather than on his muscles. The perforation of the flesh may cost him a few drops of blood, but that is all."

796 184 Not being an orthodox Santal festival, *Pata* is observed only by some classes in Mayurbhanj, and does not belong essentially to the tribal calendar.

Conclusion

105 In the chapter on Santal economic life, we have seen their annual round of activities and seasonal occupations. Now, an agricultural population alone knows the variety of risks and dangers incidental to

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

the turning points, when wind and weather decide the fate of the harvest. These aspects of the material life of the Santal are sought to be guarded by appropriate ceremonials and rituals to the tribal deities, so that the beneficent may protect the harvest, and the malevolent *Bongas* may be shorn of their malign influence. These sacrifices and libations to deities and ancestor-spirits are closely associated with all Santal public festivals, when, with community feasts, they ensure their material and spiritual well-being in a co-ordinated and organised ritual.

Various are indeed the risks with which the tribe is threatened. Rain may not fall in season ; there may again be too much of it. Locusts may eat up the corn grown, and as the people look up to these baffling mysteries of existence, they look for confidence, and want to secure good luck for themselves and their tribe. Through these festivals, the Santals want to establish a communion with the super-human powers, by first of all propitiating them with the hope that they, in their benevolence, may influence the destinies of the tribe at such turning points in the material life of the tribe.

All these religious worships attached to the festivals are community worship. While in the midst of such festivals and attendant invocations to deities, the Santal feels elevated out of this ordinary

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

105
796
78
182

day-to-day life into a region of emotions which enables him to establish a sort of a link with the invisible presiding deities of the tribe. So economic factors are linked with social ones, and religion and religious practices are inter-related to strengthen social ties, which the Santal prizes above everything else.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

533 796

It is not generally known that the Santals have elaborate song-cycles for festive occasions like the *Sohrae* (the December Harvest Home), the *Baha* (the Spring Festival), the *Pata* (the Santal Cọrọk or Hook-swinging festival) and marriages. Over and above these, the sowing of the seed and the various stages of the different harvests are celebrated with special songs by the men and women of the tribe, amidst tribal dances and ceremonies. All these songs have their own tunes as the orthodox Hindu music, although Bengali songs and Christian hymns are sung with as much gusto as their original folk-poetry. This was brought home to us once, when we accompanied Mr. Gurudas Sarkar, a Santali scholar belonging to the senior ranks of the Bengal Civil Service to a Santal village near Dumka, Santal Parganas. And imagine our surprise, when we found that one of their songs was about a Christian preaching his message in the *Kulhi* (village lane).

533 177

533 796

Religious and Semi-religious Songs

We have seen before that the most famous Santal religious festival, the *Sobrae*, celebrates the December Harvest Home. A popular song of the festival is a duet between a husband and a wife.

[539]

Tune—*Sobrae*

Wife— Maraṅ buru sèndèra dò
Gòl gòltèm calak'a

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

533
539
587
796

Kiyà baha campa baha
Nàgudarae mè—hò màiri.

Husband—Nàgu màiriñ nàguam
Cal màiriñ catam
Cèkatèm bahaya
Cèkatèm baha mòsòda.

Wife— Niñ reak' bud màiri
Niñ reak' nakil
Càuric' reñ gutuya
Bohok'reñ baha mòsòda.

(Translation)

Wife— For hunting in the big hill (Paresnath),
You are whistling while going.
Keya flowers and Campa flowers
Bring for me—O my love.

Husband—I will bring, O my love,
And put them in your hand.
(But) How will you use them (dear)?
How will you fade them out?*

Wife— O (my) love! I am wise enough,
I am clever enough.
I will string them in the plait of hair,
I will entwine them in the knob of hair.

*Literally—Do you know the art of using them till they fade out?

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

533
539
796

Another song, sung on the concluding day of the *Sobrae*, welcomes the visitors and describes the chronic agricultural distress:

Dèho durup'pè,
Dèho tèngonpè,
Jòmak' nunyak' bòeha banuk'taleya
Met' ñèpèl bòeha ahajibà.

Akal kèdac gateñ sawanek'edac
Ità rànu gateñ bale ñawana
Sanam hòpòniñ ko ḍingra cabayèn.

Kiminiñ hò kiminiñ
Kursà baha kiminiñ
Kiminiñ mòn gedò bàñ ñamlèt'.

Pai pàilàñ natacèkèda
Bàṇḍi hoṛoñ nalackèt'
Kiminiñ mòn gèdò bàñ ñamlèt'.

(Translation)

Welcome, welcome! O friends dear!
(We have) neither food nor drink to offer,
But we offer you our greetings.
(It matters little whether) the harvest failed
or it was in plenty.
For want of seeds (and consequent want
of food)
All my sons have nothing of their own.

31 Mukherjee O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

533
539
796

Look there at my daughter-in-law!
Look, how beautiful she looks like the
Kursà flower;
But I could not win her heart.
To get her as a bride, I spent all I had,
But I could not win her heart.

796
533
538

In the chapter on "Cycle of Santal Festivals," we have noted an extract of a song singing the advent of Spring, during the *Baha* (Flower Festival). This festival has got an elaborate cycle of songs, many of which are not easily amenable to translation, being full of archaic Santali; but they contain poetry that is simple, spontaneous and fragrant of the "smell of Mother Earth." One sample taken from the first two stanzas of a duet, as given there, will give the reader a glimpse of the essential poetry of the Santals. Similarly, we have seen that the *Pata* (Santal *Còṛòk*, Hook-swinging festival) has its own round of songs, and we have marked the *joi de vivre* as reflected in the song already quoted, (in our account of the festival) in which a woman requests her sister to accompany her to the "uplands" to witness the *Pata* festival for three days to their heart's content.

Marriage Songs

585
538
533

Marriage, always a fruitful source of poetry and humour, has produced a song-cycle amongst the

3s Mukherjea O. Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

535 long steps forward, and next they move back with two steps of a shorter nature. It is a fascinating sight to see the ebony beauties bending their bodies half, and swinging up and down with a graceful lithe motion like a field of corn before the wind.

533 535 The *joie de vivre* knows no bounds. Kettle-drums, cymbals and flutes fill the atmosphere with a jocund din, while the dance goes on for fifteen minutes with men singing and women replying in chorus.

Jàtur ènèc'

• 796 535 The time for this dance is the Harvest Festival (Sòhrae) and the Flower-Festival (Baha), when the village-priest offers oblations to the deities of the Holy Grove at day time. Men dance separately in a circle outside the circular female group. The dancers take two steps forward, bend the knees and gracefully raise their folded hands. Next, they turn two steps backwards and swing the hands up and down in a parallel fashion. So they dance on till the completion of the ceremonies in the afternoon, men singing and women replying in chorus.

796 782 535 This is a purely devotional dance, in course of which, the dancers salute the gods of the Holy Grove, because they have given the Santals a bumper harvest (as during the *Sòhrae*, December Harvest

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Home) or because there are promises of a beautiful spring ahead (as during the *Baha*, Spring festival). The object of the dance is that should such dances take place, the tribe will have agricultural prosperity, children will have good health, diseases will not attack the Santals and there will be an all-round welfare to the village. So it is customary for the Santal to promise a *Jàtur* dance to the deity, in case of apprehended calamities as cholera or other epidemics.

796
782
535

Riñja ènèc'

The afternoons of "Gamah-Purnima' are the occasions for the dance known as Riñja. The youths and maids of the tribe form two separate circles, with musicians in the centre of each. The dancers do not inter-lock the hands, and each member dances singly in response to the melody sung. The "Riñja" has eight particular movements, and one sees the dancers making a circular movement with the hands raised sometimes, while the left hand swings gracefully. So the dance goes on, and the circular motions, backwards and forwards, draw applause from the spectators.

535
796

"Riñja" is danced during "Karam Puja," and the object of the dance is to please the deities so that Santals may have prosperity in this material world.

796
782
535

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

535 world. Various magical and imitative suggestions
796 can be noticed in "Riñja" dances. Thus agricul-
789 tural implements are represented by movements suggesting a smith hammering. Other movements show the dancers cutting jungles, giving a boundary to agricultural plots, milking cows, and even cock-crows are imitated to show that the house-holder should now rise from his bed and go to his field.

796 It was also stated that the Santals believe that
789 if "Riñja" is not danced during Karam Puja, there
535 will be no rain. In the dance movements, one can
[731] see that the dancers swing their right hand up and down, thus magically invoking rain. On other
[783] occasions, should a drought be apprehended, "Riñja" may be danced in the village *akhra* (the village dancing-yard) after purifying it with cow-dung and sprinkling *mithi* (a spice). This is undoubtedly a magical process to bring down rain on the earth.

Ḍaṇṭa ènèc'

796
535 The next, "Ḍaṇṭa," is danced during the Harvest Festival (Sòhrae) and is a special preserve of the youths of the tribe. They form two circles with the musicians in the central position. A peculiarity of the dance is that in the beginning they step twice to the right and then twice to the

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

left, as they advance forwards. But when the circles swing backwards, it is with a brisk picturesque

Danta Musicians

movement that they do so. Thus they dance from early morning till mid-day, without any girls as dancing partners.

"Danta" is no independent dance, but is indulged in as a relaxation. Women do not join these dances, as they cannot skip sufficiently as the steps require, and more specially because the songs that accompany the dances are frequently too amorous. Many of these refer to women and a very decent one purports as follows:—

Some boys go to a tank; they catch fish, roast and divide. While they eat the fish thus roasted, they give all the bones to women.

Mention should be made of some special steps of the *Danta* and their probable significance. It is noteworthy that when the dancers in both rows

3t Mukherjea C. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

musicians display their skill to the admiring by-standers. 535

This is a religious dance and a prelude to the forthcoming Flower Festival (*Baha*). The songs are also devotional and refer to the deities of the Holy Grove. [533]

Baha ènèc'

As its name signifies, this is danced during the *Baha* (flower festival), when on the second day, men and women of the tribe go to the Holy Grove (Jahèrthan) to accompany the village priest, out to invoke the deities there. [796]

This is also a devotional dance, in which only women take part. They do not inter-lock their hands, form no circles, but proceed in a tripping marching order with musicians in a separate group. As they go on, men sing and women reply in chorus. It is picturesque to see the dancers waving their right hands upwards, up to the shoulders, which are swung down soon to be folded beautifully. When the right hand is raised, the right foot takes a step. Next advances the left foot, and the folded hands are raised up with a devotional beam in their eyes. So they go on till they reach the Holy Grove and thus dance round it thrice.

Baha is also danced when the village priest returns home with the flowers on the final day of the flower festival (*Baha*).

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

HUNTING

Hunting:—In hunting the Santals are particularly 224
expert. Nothing pleases them so much as to be out after game with bows and arrows. As soon as they come to know that a party is out for hunting they give up their work and join the party. Hunting was one of the earliest methods of the Santals for the search of food. As except the reserved forests, the real forests [137]
have mostly disappeared, so game which they get by hunting is extremely poor. Consequently they are now compelled to adopt agriculture as their main source for collecting food. Still they celebrate the annual 224 796 793
hunting (Dehri hunting) excursion of a magico-religious nature. The Dehri hunting, which is the most important hunting of the Santals, takes place once a year [221] [824]
in the month of Falgun (February and March). Dehri, their hunting priest carries a big branch of a Sal-tree (shorea robusta) with leaves and goes to the market, where people seeing him understand the purpose of his coming. As each leaf represents a day so they count them all and go out for hunting just after the number of days as indicated by the leaves of the branch. In this hunting expedition people of distant villages take part. The Dehri is responsible for the 224 796 793 782
hunt, i. e. (all goes well and no mishap occurs). By divination he finds out as to who are threatened by any danger during the hunt, and advises them to turn back but they generally make him sacrifice fowls for [787]
them to Sin-Bonga to avert the impending calamity. He performs some ceremony and offers sacrifices to bongas

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

224
[796]

[793] of the forest where the hunt is to be held, to ensure
[782] success and safety. After performance of the ceremony
the whole party enters the forest with bows and
[411] arrows, Pellet bows (Gorkhas), Slings (Gaduar),
[534] Tangha (Kopi), battle axes, dogs and Tamuka (drums)
and Sakuas (Blowpipe made of buffalo horn) which
they beat and blow furiously all through the hunt.

In the forest they stand side by side in a long line surrounding an area. Some remain ready with their weapons behind the big trees, the drums and blowpipes of horn they beat and blow furiously. The men nearest to the game shoot their arrows at them; when the animals being frightened run hither and thither, men shoot arrows, sling stones and tanghas at them. If the game elude the arrows and other weapons shot or hurled at them, the baffled hunts-men shout out and let their dogs run after them. The men, who stand in line, then entangle the game and the hunters who followed the game come up and
[114] kill them. Once when I was at Bokrabandh and Katahaldih I saw the Santal process of catching hares and ichneuman The Santals barricade a meadow, which is just by the side of a forest, with branches of trees and bamboos, only keeping open the side which is towards the forest. They keep an opening on one side where they fix a trap. They drive the hares from the jungle towards the place which is surrounded by the branches. The hares run towards the trap and fall into it. They kill ichneuman in the following way. The inchneuman remains under the ground and some dig holes, while others remain ready with Tanghis. As soon as it comes out they strike or throw Tanghis

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

535 fix flowers in their coiffure and over the ear. The males
[80] also tie peacock's feather on their foreheads. I am now
[302] describing the dancing of the maidens which I saw
[114] personally in front of Katikund bungalow, which is fifteen miles from Dumka. The maidens stand closely in a line in order of height. They then fall away sidewise to form a big semicircle, limbs all moving as if they belong to one creature. They move forward two or three steps and in the same fashion they move backward and at the same time they make a circular
[533] movement. The dancers in the ring sing songs all the while to the music of the flute. Three or four men take their stand in the centre of the ring, beating Tum tum and semi-circular drums furiously.

796 **Dancing during Baha festivals** :- Their dancing at the
535 time of Baha festivals is different from that described above. They stand in a line the tallest first and the shortest last, then they bend down and each one raises and lowers both hands. In this way they move forward
[533] two or three steps and again come back. As above the dancers in the line sing songs, drumming and fluting goes on all the while.

535 **Dancing in which both male and female take part** :- Both maidens and youths decked with flowers and peacock's feathers hold hands so that the breasts of the girl touch the back of the man next to her, going round in a great
[533] circle. The dancers sing in tune to the music of drums and flutes played by the musicians in the centre of the circle.

859 **Games**:- In old days there was more play and less
178 work for Santal children. But now-a-days they have to go with their parents to the fields and do their share

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

614 None of these appear to be associated with the idea of culture heroes as amongst the Amerindians. [538] The folk-lore shows indeed some stories centering round the plants (betel-palm, Panjaun tree, Sabai grass) and animals (tiger, jackal, leopard, crab). Besides these some of the clans' names centre round industrial objects and articles of usefulness such as chain, earthen vessel, etc. These would be more in line with a belief in objects possessing mana and venerated as such and gradually getting associated with exogamous subdivisions which might have had a hand in the invention or diffusion of those useful objects. There is no [796] seasonal recurring ceremonial round these objects meant for the preservation or propogation of the animals or plants venerated as ancestors, as in Australia. There [784] is indeed some taboo in the use by the particular subclan of the plant and animal venerated as its ancestor. The animal and plant thus venerated are taboo to the clans; none can hunt it, nor can they partake of its flesh. But because of the observation of this taboo the Santals are in no sense plant and animal worshippers. [796] It seems that their idea of bongas inhabiting all creeks and corners of nature, has been extended only to the region of certain animals and plants. In the folklore [793] the bongas are generally represented as using seats of [825] hooded cobras and certain serpents are naturally vene- [262] rated as clan-ancestors; on the other hand, the common water-snake (Dhamna) is eaten by almost all the Santals. Of the animals not eaten by the Santals all are not associated with clan-names such as the Frog, Gibbon, Elephant, Dog, etc.

791 If the religion of the Santals may thus be described 796 as veneration of a Supreme Being and reverential awe

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

757
177
174 witches. But the majority comprises of herbs and sometimes also minerals, leading one to suspect strongly the influence of Hindu indigeneous Kaviraji treatment which had been universally adopted (ancient Hindu medicinal treatises having been translated into Arabic and passed through it into mediaeval European pharmacopoeia). Thus for instance the use of Rasa-Sindur is distinctly Hindu, the word Rasa being the old Hindu word for a form of preparation of mercury. Similarly, some names such as Kababchini or tobacco-water show post-Mahomedan adoption.

796
278
824 It may be mentioned here that there is a seasonal ceremonial called Ranjagao for the vitalising or blessing of medicinal plants in general, at the time of the autumnal Dasai parab. This has no reference to any special ingredients but increases the effectiveness of medicine in general. There are certain instructions given as to the time and mode.

757 The method of diagnosis, generally followed, is by feeling the pulse as amongst the Hindu Kavirajes.

(b) **Tejo Theory**

[759]
753 The Santal calls in the Rarantic for diseases due to natural causes. But he also has a theory of disease which in his scientific viewpoint is as natural a cause as infection caused by bacteria. But we can look upon it as an agency which is natural and yet supernatural and sometimes also diffused with human agency. According to them diseases would be caused by a tejo which may be large or very miscroscopic. These tejos are located in different parts of the body, some at the root of the nose and some in different parts of the body.

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

778 the last is a Mowah tree; on its foot a stone representing the deity *Gosain Era* is kept. This is the most important one and is known as Lady of the Grove.

• 796 247 In the Santal villages there is a succession of festivals throughout the year, nearly all connected with agricultural operations. The chief of these is the *Sohras* or *Banda parab* or the harvest festival, celebrated in the Bengali month Pous (i.e., at the beginning of the month of January) after the rice crop of the year has been harvested. This festival generally lasts for five days. Previously there was no fixed date, villagers of one locality performing this festival one day, others performing on some other day. But now-a-days the [178] [211] Deputy Commissioner of the Santal Parganas fixes the date for this festival, and this date is proclaimed by a man with a *sal* branch in his hand in every *hat*. Before this *parab*, Santal women buy large earthen vessels and replace old ones which they bought in the previous year. When the day has been fixed all houses prepare "handia" (rice beer) and people invite their relatives. [793] [784] [834] [624] The night before the festival commences, the *Naiks* is religiously-abstinent for before any sacrifice the sacrificer must not have relations with a woman and should sleep on the ground on a mat. At day break the *goddet* goes round and collects sacrificial fowls from every house. In the middle of the forenoon the *Naiks* goes near a tank together with some of the [793] [782] village people, the *goddet* taking the fowls with him. The *Naiks* bathes and then sacrifices the fowls to the different *bongas* after which the villagers cook the fowls with rice and eat them, and also drink rice beer. After this the villagers go to *Kulimucha* (i.e.,

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

the meadow on the outskirts of the village), and there they draw rectangular compartments side by side, and in each compartment they put some adwa rice and in one compartment they put an egg of a hen. They then call the cowboys with the cattle and make the latter tread out the above figures. The cow which treads on and breaks the egg or simply smells it, is caught. They wash her feet, anoint the horns with oils and also smear vermilion on them. The idea is that the owner of the cow will have good luck. The cow is then lifted up and carried on the shoulder and put down before the *manjhi* (headman) whom the owner salutes and then all elderly men of the village. This the Santals call *Gote puja*.

On the second day in each house of the village within the cowshed the eldest member of the house performs a *puja*. In the centre of the cowshed he draws a circle and within it he puts adwa rice and paints vermilion and kills white and red fowls and sacrifices pig to *Marang Buru*, the household gods and their ancestors. All the men of the village go with their ploughyokes, battle-axes and knives to bathe. On that day no outsiders are allowed to enter the house. The Santals call this *Gora bonga puja*.

The third day they set wooden poles in the village street, a bundle of straw being tied on the top of the poles, put some flowers on the poles and also tie five pieces of bread made of powdered rice. Then a bull, after washing and smearing oil on its horns and painting vermilion on them, is tied to the pole. Then the bachelors and little boys of the village begin to drum, dance and scream so furiously that the animals becomes excited and begin to jump. To the horns of all the cows and buffaloes of the villages a piece of straw is

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 241 tied and vermilion with mustard oil painted. Friends come and go visiting one another, all (both male and female) more or less drunk and wild with excitement. [624] After all is over, the young people drink and eat in the house of the *jog-manjhi*.

[786] The other two days are for nothing but to enjoy life, merry-making going on in full swing with full sex license. For the five days and nights during which the festival lasts the Santals indulge in a veritable saturnalia giving themselves up to dancing, eating, drinking, singing and sexual license. Although this license does not allow adultery, nor does it sanction intercourse between persons of the same sept, yet if the latter offence is committed it is punished less severely than at other times.

796 **Sakrat Festival.** After this another festival known as *Sakrat* takes place on the last day of the month of [177] [226] Pous (December and January). This is an imitation of the Hindu *Pous Sankranti* festival. The Santals (only males) go out fishing to the streamlet a day before the actual festival. From the morning of that day the women are busy preparing cakes of parched rice. [262] The men folk eat curd and parched rice (chura) and go out for hunting in the morning. The cakes are first offered to the ancestors and then eaten. In the after- [526] [624] noon the *Jogmanjhi* collects all the adult males of the village in an adjoining field for archery and other sports. After that in the evening they dance and sing, drink rice beer and spend the day in various kinds of [262] amusements. On the third day they go out to the fair or market (*hat*) after eating a preparation of rice and dal boiled together.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

Baha Parab. Next in importance is the *Baha parab* which is held in the Bengali month Phalgun (February-March). This festival takes place when the sal trees (shorea robusta) begin to flower. *Baha* is a Santali word which means flower. The purpose of holding this festival is that the new year is well commenced. Drinking, dancing and singing go on in this festival also. The festival takes place in the *Jahersthan* and the *Naike* and *Kudum Naike* worship in the *Jahersthan*. On the first day of the festival the young people of the village build two sheds in *Jahersthan*, one for *Jaher-era*, *Turuko Moreko* and *Marang Buru* and the other for *Gosain era*. The *sthans* are cleaned by plastering with cowdung. Then they go to bathe and oil several articles (winnowing fan, basket, bow and arrows, battle-axe, broom, a wristlet, a necklace and bell and horn of a buffalo which they call *sakua*) which are to be used next day, when three persons become possessed by the three first bongas mentioned above. The whole night is spent in drumming at the house of the *Naike*, where all assemble with *bongas* (the persons who will be possessed with bongas are called *bongas*). Jaher-era is a female diety and a man who is possessed with this *bonga* takes the ornaments, the basket and the broom; *Moreka* takes the bow and arrow and *Marang Buru* carries the battle-axe. With these articles they start running for the *Jahersthan* followed by the boys who carry drums cymbals, bugle and bull-roarer. On arriving at the *Jahersthan*, *Jaher-era* sweeps the place; the *Naike* asks the *bongas* (i.e., those who are possessed with the deities) for the things they have brought and places them on a mat. He then asks them questions

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 [787] about the happenings of the coming year. The *Naike* then washes the *bongas* and throws the surplus water over them, whereupon the *bongas* jump up howling. Then they return home.

796 798 Next day they again go to the *Jahersthan*. When they see a fine *sal* tree in bloom, *Moreka* shoots an arrow into it, while *Marang Buru* climbs it and cuts down the flowering branches, *Jahar-era* receiving the flowers in a basket. On the road *Marang Buru* gathers mowah blossoms. In the *Jahersthan* the *bongas* are 796 again placed on a mat under the shed, and the *Naike*, 798 sitting in front of them, sacrifices the fowls, and places a 793 bunch of flowers with a mowah flower before each *bonga*. [782] The *bongas* suck the blood of the fowls, whereupon the *Naike* washes their feet. *Jahar-era* doing the same to the *Naike*. The *Naike*, together with his wife who is now brought to the *Jahersthan* for the purpose, eats one of the fowls cooked with rice; some of the villagers eat the rest in the *Jahersthan*. After this all leave, except the *Naike* who remains alone in the *Jahersthan*. The villagers then proceed to sacrifice [782] fowls and pigs in their own houses, and to eat and drink. In the afternoon they go to the *Jahersthan* to bring the *Naike* back and the rest of the day is spent in general merry making. The women also enjoy to their heart's content.

241 796 The Santals perform several festivals before sowing seeds and also after reaping when they offer the first fruits to the village deities.

[778] **Erok-Puja**: This festival they perform before sowing seeds in the newly ploughed field. They celebrate it in

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

the *Jahersthan* in the month of Asadh (June-July). *Naike* and his assistant *Kudum Naike* perform the function. Five fowls are sacrificed in the *Jahersthan*. After the function they cook these fowls and eat them. the heads of the fowls are taken by the *Naike* and *Kudum Naike*.

Hariar Sim: The Santals hold this festival at the time of the sprouting of rice, which takes place in the month of Sraban (July-August). Fowls are sacrificed to all the tribal and village deities and prayers are offered for a bountiful harvest.

Janthar Puja (Nawai) This festival is held in the month of Agrahayan (November-December) in the *Jahersthan* when the first gathering of the winter rice crop is offered Similarly the first gathering of the millets is offered in the sacred grove in the month of Bhadra (August-September) which the Santals call Irigrudli-nawai. The *Naike* reaps a little of the crop and offers to the village deities in the *Jahersthan*, and ties a twig round the five trees of the *Jahersthan* The *Naike* at the time of uttering prayer pours some milk on the offerings. Similar offerings are made by each householder of the village to the spirits of their ancestors.

Mak' More: This festival is observed by the Santals generally at intervals of five years or so in the *Jahersthan* as a result of vows made at times of distress or epidemics. Fowls are sacrificed and a white goat is sacrificed in the name of the village community to *Mokroko*, one of the five deities of Santals which they worship in the *Jahersthan*. The flesh of the sacrified

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 782 animals is eaten by the men. The only woman who gets a share is the wife of the priest. Drinking, dancing and singing are followed by young men and women of the village.

796 614 [184] **Jom Sim:** The *Jom Sim* is performed with many quaint ceremonies which differ somewhat for the different clans. That is why it is called clan festival. Mr. Culshaw recorded some stories from which it can be ascertained how it is connected with clan. "The 614 796 539 Karwak Hasdak tell the story of how long ago their ancestors were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and all the Hasdak were present. They had performed the sacrifices and everyone had been served with rice and meat, but some of the younger folk present felt that they had not been given enough to eat, so they killed a buffalo, or kada, became known as Karwar Hasdak". The Soren Santal relate "that in the very early days the ancestors of the Soren were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and some of the company began to prepare the food and cook it. In imitation of Brahmin cooks [179] they put on sacred threads and served all the people. From that time they became known as poita Soren".[1]

796 614 174 It is probably the oldest sacrifice the Santal have because it has more aboriginal features in it than any other sacrifice of theirs.

224 793 [22] [324] [211] **Dihri Hunting:** The *Dihri* hunting, which is the most important hunting of the Santals which takes place once a year in the month of Falgun (February and March). *Dihri*, their hunting priest carries a big branch of a *Sal* tree with leaves and goes to the market, where people

[1] W.J. Culshaw—Tribal heritage. 1949. pp. 74 and 78.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

seeing him understand the purpose of his coming. As each leaf represents a day so they count them all and go out for hunting after just the number of days as indicated by the leaves of the branch. In this hunting expedition people of distant villages take part. The *Dihri* is responsible for the hunt, i.e. (all goes well and no mishap occurs). By divination he finds out as to who are threatened by any danger during the hunt, and advises them to turn back but they generally make him sacrifice fowls for them to *Sin Bonga* to avert the impending calamity. He performs some ceremony and offers sacrifices to *bongas* of the forest where the hunt is to be held, to ensure success and safety in the following way:

The *Dihri* enters the forest and being naked, pricks his whole body except the joints, with the thorn of a bush. He then draws a small circle on the ground with powdered rice and puts some adwa rice mixed with the blood which comes out from his body and makes a vermilion mark inside the circle. The *Dihri* then gives a little rice to all the forest *bongas*. Others who are following him, then enter the forest with bows and arrows.

Mag-Sim: The Santals perform this festival in the month of Magh (January-February) when the jungle grass is mown; fowls are sacrificed to all the *bongas* by the village priest and his assistant. This festival marks the end of the Santal year. All the village officials go through the form of resigning their offices and the cultivators give up their lands. After a week the headman of the village says before all the villagers that he has changed his mind and would like to continue in the

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 post, they generally accept it and this is followed by free drinks of handia (rice beer) and acclamations. All the other officials do the same and all other things remain the same as before.

796 177 I now propose to describe here some festivals which are believed to have been borrowed by the Santals from others. These are as follows :

Jatra Parab : The Santals have probably borrowed this from the *Bhuiyas*[1]. They perform this festival somewhere outside the village in the month of Magh (January-February). Pieces of stone are imbedded in raised mounds of earth and are painted with vermilion. The Naike then mixes some adwa rice, with milk and betel-nut together and offers this compound [782] to the *bonga*. Then a pigeon and a goat are sacrificed [787] and their blood poured out as an oblation. During the performance oracles are chanted by three or five persons in number, who sit close in a row on some adjacent spot, wag their heads to and fro all the time and work themselves into a prophetic frenzy. Any Santal, who consults them in a reverent manner, will at once get an answer to his questions whether as to his bodily ailments, the death of his cattle or the suspected presence of a witch in his village. For this at least four annas are thrown down at the feet of those five persons.

The Chata Parba : This is a Hindu festival which takes place in the rainy season in the month of Bhadra and is observed by one sept, the Hasdah and by their Kamars (blacksmiths). The preliminary function of

[1] A Tribe of Chota Nagpur (Bihar).

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 •
177

this festival resembles those of all the others but at the end of the offering a ceremony takes place. A wooden pole, about twelve cubits long, is erected and made to [417] turn a half circle perpendicularly and horizontally. The pole is fastened on a loose but strong iron pivot which rests in hole made in two upright pieces of wood about six feet in height from the ground. On the top of this revolving pole is tied a small ornamented umbrella and this is caused to jerk first one way and then the other. The reaction of this pole is followed with shouts and other noisy demonstrations of delight, the people gather handfuls of dust and dirt and forthwith begin to pelt the umbrella. This novel mode of veneration is at the same time accompanied with dances both by males and females. Refreshments and handia (rice beer) are dealt out from sheds erected for the purpose and the whole assembled population regale themselves in the open air with it. The sacrifices in this festival are always eaten at home and not on the spot.

Pata Parab: This festival is performed by the Santals in the month of Bhadra in honour of their *Pata Bonga*. It is a corrupt form of the Hindu *Charak festival*, in which the Hindus offer puja to Lord Siva. During this time Santals do acrobatic acts in honour of their [417] deity. On a vertical pole a revolving cross bar is fixed, [526] on either end of which a man is held by an iron hook fastened to his clothing. The pair then are swung round [178] and round very fast. Now-a-days instead of the iron hook a length of rope is used to hold the men in position. In this festival the same sacrifices are offered [782] as at *Jatra Parab*.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

796 177 Besides these, the Santals join in many of the Hindu festivals. In the *Durga Puja* ceremony the Santals come te[2] see the ceremoney and rejoice. Within their village they, both males and females, sing and dance together for these five days. The Santals 175 perform the *Kali Puja*. Evidence of this can be 177 ascertained from news published in one of the daily 796 newspapers in the year 1933 on February 16th.

[204] "The Santal Guru Sannyasi Baba has sent the following letter to be District Magistrate, Malda :

About a hundred Santals from Malda bring it to my notice that their annual Kali puja which was so long performed by their Sardar Jitu under my orders is going to be stopped. Unhappily, Jitu under a sad mistake died and the Santal Kali puja should not, on that account, be stopped. On the other hand, to allay this strained feeling amongst the Santals I propose to hold the Santal Kali puja at Malda myself. I assure you there will be no disturbance and not only that it will bring back the old good feelings so far as practicable under the circumstance.

As the puja will be held in the month of Falgun I shall be highly obliged to recive an early reply to this letter at your earliest convenience. The annual Santal shooting passed off smoothly and the authorities allowed it and were satisfied."[1]

---

[1] The Amrita Bazar Patrika, February 16, 1933.

2 [Erratum: this should read "to." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. ix -- Analyst]

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

Santal Administrative Officer.

Manjhi (Headman) : The basis of the Santal communal system is the village. Santals will never settle alone in an uncultivated area ; they go there in a body and settle with a leader and his assistants. The leader is known as *Manjhi* (headman), being chosen by the village people to administer the rights, rules and ceremonies of the Santal village community. No public sacrifice, no festival, no ceremony such as marriage can properly be done without the *Manjhi* taking the lead or initiative. The *Manjhi* is the representative of the village both in external and internal affairs. He also collects rents from the villagers. If the headman of a Santal village be other than a Santal (such as Kumar or Bauri) which sometimes happens, the Santals will have for themselves an official called *Handi Manjhi* who performs all the duties of the Santal village except collecting rent and other work demanded by the Government.

Assistant to the Headman-Paramanik Jogmanjhi : There are two assistants to the *Manjhi*, one is *Paramanik* and the other is the *Jogmanjhi*. The *Paramanik* is the principal assistant and representative of the *Manjhi* by whom he is chosen. If the *Manjhi* dies without any male issue or brothers then the *Paramanik* will get the office. In his (*Manjhi's*) social functions the *Manjhi* is assisted by the *Jogmanjhi*. His duty to prevent sexual intercourse in the same sept and also with a *diku* (non-Santal). If a girl becomes pregnant the *Jogmanjhi* has to find out who the culprit is. If he does not, the villagers tie him with the rope used for tying a buffalo to a pole in the cowshed of the *Manjhi* and scold him and fine him.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

624 and scold him and fine him. At the time of *Sohrae parab* all the villagers, young and old, male and
•[796] female, drink handi (rice beer). Singing, dancing and other entertainments go on without restriction for five days and nights and at these times the boys and girls remain in charge of the Jogmanjhi. At the birth of a
[844] child and at marriages he is in charge of those cere-
[585] monies, and when the village youths attend a night festival he is in charge of them. Formerly he had a
[178] very important position though now gradually he is losing all authority; but the young people still use him as a safe repository of their secrets. The *Jogmanjhi* has an assistant called *Jog-Paramanik* who officiates when he is absent.

Village Beadle—Goddet (Gorait-Risley) : Next in rank is the *Goddet*, an orderly or peon of the headman of the village, who calls the villagers together at his command and also collects sacrificial fowl for the village sacrifices. Whenever any foreigner comes in the village and enquires about the headman, the *Goddet* at once
[114] runs and informs him. (One morning I went to a village at Katikund within Dumka Sub-division. I asked the villager where the headman of the village was. The *Goddet* said he was in the agricultural field and at once ran to call him. He then came back with the headman to me). The Santals call the *Goddet Marang, Manjhi* i.e., great chief, and there are many instances of *Goddets* having ousted a *Manjhi* or even a *Parganait*. If a *Paramanik* gets the office of *Manjhi* it is considered proper that the *Goddet* should become *Paramanik*.

4: Biswas D, F-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

movement which had some tinge of Hinduism. This movement was started in 1871. The leader of this movement was known as Bhagrit of Taldiha and a title of *'babaji'* was added to his name. The word *'babaji'* is a Hindu word and so it seems that it was taken from the Hindus. Later on he was arrested and imprisoned and for the time being this movement was suppressed. Again in 1880 it was revived by one Dubia Gosain who came from the vicinity of Deoghar. His activities were more pro-Hindu. Several Hindu practices were introduced by this movement and one distinguishing feature was the worship of the *'babaji'* in the manner of reverence paid to the Sanyasis by the Hindus. The religious side of the movement had a colouring of Hinduism. The *'babaji'* smeared his body with ashes, took ganja and kept long hair and worshipped Mahadeo (Siva).

It is probable that due to this Kharwar movement the Santals have introduced some Hindu deities—Kalimata, Lakhmi mai, (goddess of wealth) Parvati, Mahadeo etc. in their pantheon of *Bongas*. The Santals have belief in Rama and Krishna, the Hindu Avtars.

The word Thakur is sometimes used by them in place of their High God Cando. The word Thakur is of Sanskrit origin and the Hindus use this name for gods in general.

Some of the festivals of the Santals have Hindu counter parts. The Pata Parab of the Santals is the imitation of the Hindu festival "Charak Puja". In this puja the Hindus worship Siva (Mahadeo). The Santal Sankrat festival is equivalent to the Hindu Pous

4: Biswas D, Σ-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

177 Pabban. The Santals observe this festival on the last
796 day of the month of Pous, just like the Hindus do.

Besides this, the Santals take part in the Durga Puja festival of the Hindus. They wear new clothes and attend the Puja with wives and children and enjoy the fun for five days like the Hindus.

756 There exists a great controversy about the institu-
177 tion of Ojhaism among the Santals. There are possi-
178 bilities of its having been borrowed from the Hindus by the Santals since the practice of this form of magico-religious ritual has much in common between the two groups, namely the Santals and the Hindus. Rev. [114] Bodding also points out the probability of the borrowing of the principles for *Ojhaism* and much of its ritual from the Hindus though he does not thereby exclude completely the converse. In part substantiation of the above contention, which however is opposed by some authors on the subject, may be cited the striking similarity between the names and functions of the Santal and Hindu *Ojhas*, pointing to perhaps a strong interconnection between the two groups in respect of *Ojhaism*. The very name *Ojha* is Hindi and is adopted by the Santals from Hindi speaking people. Further it is interesting to note that *Ojha* is a caste name among the Hindu Brahmins, and in the early days the occupation of this caste group was mainly soothsaying, foretelling and astrology and curing snake bites etc. The concentration of such groups is in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. It may therefore be considered very probable that the Santals have borrowed from the Hindus the essentials of *Ojhaism*, though certain indigenous

797 sprang from this pair. Also they correlate *Maran Buru* with 'Satan'. They believe that *Maran Buru* spoiled the first human pair and revealed to them the secret of sexual intercourse, just like the Christian who believe that Satan is responsible for the downfall of the first pair, Adam and Eve. The converted Santals observe the Christmas Day and Good Friday. Harvest Festivals are celebrated by decorating Churches and offering prayers.

Effect on the Social Culture of the Santals due to alien influence. The social system of the Santal is communistic in nature. In any festival, or ceremony the whole village takes part. This cohesion is now losing its strength. For this, missionary activities are to a certain extent responsible. The Christian converts are being cut off from social intercourse. Sometime a christian family is put to great inconvenience. This is particularly the case when a death occurs for the non-christians will have nothing whatever to do with the disposal of the dead body. The non-christian method of disposing the dead body is by cremation whereas the converted Santals practise burial and subsequent mourning and funeral ceremonies according to the Christian way. There is no bar to marrying more than one wife in Santal tribal custom. But this practice is strictly prohibited among Christian Santals as Christian religion strictly prohibits *bigamy*. Cross cousin marriage, and marriage with non-Santals is not tolerated by the tribal Santals but among Christian Santals, these things are not prohibited.

The marriage ceremony is held either in the Church or in the courtyards of the house of the bride's parents

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

up for non-payment of the accumulated debt, which by then was a considerably larger sum. They were thus compelled to make new agreements with their landlord at an enhanced rent and with inferior rights. The later passage of legislation has done little to lift the burden of despair about the future which is an unhappy characteristic of Santal life today. Such incidents explain in no-small measure the cry of the heart which is heard from time to time: "Give us back our land." It is some consolation that the Act of 1918, followed by legislation during the last twenty years aimed at improving the status of the peasantry in Bengal, has brought to a close some of the worst chapters in a long and sordid story.

The community life of the Santal centres in his village, and is so organized as to make common action inevitable in social, economic and religious affairs. The houses are built on either side of the village street, which must be left wide enough for two bullock carts to pass each other. This street extends from east to west, the eastern end being known as the upper end. The houses, set close together, have their main door opening on to the village street, and each household is responsible for the state of the road outside its own residence. It is here in the village that the Santal learns how to live; here he is initiated into the traditional loyalties of the tribe, and the village of his birth exercises a deep influence over him all his days.

The village headman, or *manjhi*, is the man of greatest consequence in the community. The post is hereditary, and it passes ordinarily to the eldest son of the former headman. When the direct line of succession fails through lack of sons or from incapacity on the part of the natural heir, the office passes on to a brother or near relative on the paternal side. The history of the village is preserved in the tradition handed down concerning the headman's ancestry. For example, at Sarenga they tell a story of the three brothers who were the founders of the village and divided the village offices between them. Among them Lokhon has acquired the greatest measure of renown, and he is commemorated by a shrine outside the present village. The story is told that he died suddenly, and before the news of his death had spread through the village his spirit took possession of a young man sitting in the courtyard of a house some distance away, and through him Lokhon told the villagers that they were to make a special shrine for him. There is a ceremony at the beginning of each new year which suggests that at one time the appointment of the head-

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

man, together with that of all the other officials, was renewed annually, but there is little reality in it at the present day and the post is held for life. He is the spokesman of the villagers in all matters affecting their temporal welfare. In the original settlements it was usual for two or three brothers to start the new village together. The eldest brother assumed the leading position, and all the lands cleared or claimed for the future were in his gift. The cultivable land was divided equally after some portions had been reserved for the officials in recognition of the services they would be called on to perform for the benefit of the community, and the headman received the biggest share of the reserved land. As the village grew, others came to settle. Some became the tenants of the headman, fleeing from the oppression of landlords elsewhere. Others came into the village by marrying daughters of the first settlers. So it comes about that the family of the headman is the most substantial in the village. During the course of years, however, even the headman has in the majority of cases lost his original rights to a non-Santal landlord and has himself become an under-tenant; in spite of which his family has maintained its favourable position in relation to the rest of the villagers. In some cases he has also been able to acquire the rights of other tenants who have defaulted for one reason or another in paying rent. In addition to land, the headman receives other payments which he can use for his own benefit. Thus, when an offender against tribal custom is fined the headman receives a fourth of the total amount. During the spring hunts he receives a part of the flesh of every animal slain by a man from his own village. During the marriage ceremonies he occupies an important position throughout, and when a new bride is coming to his village her father has to pay a rupee to him before the party sets out from her home. At all times he is treated with great respect, especially by the younger members of the community. A marriage party always pays its respects first at his house, and at festivals, when the young men go dancing through the village street, they start outside the headman's house.

In all matters involving the members of more than one village he is the acknowledged representative of his own people, whether it be the making of arrangements for a marriage or the fixing of dates for festivals and for hunts. In the settling of disputes he acquires considerable experience, being the chairman of the council in his own village and meeting with the headmen of other villages when the hunt council sits. Enjoying a position

Si Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

They have no memory of ever having possessed the institution, but a snatch of song once heard suggests that they did at some period abandon it. In a *Sohrae* song occur the words

> The young girls are sleeping in the girls' house,
> The young men are sleeping in the young men's cowshed.[1]

If, as seems likely, they once had such an institution, it is probable that the *jogmanjhi* and his wife were in charge. At some festivals the young men sleep at the house of the *jog manjhi*, and at the time of the *Sohrae* they go to him at the beginning of the festival and ask him in formal language to turn a blind eye to any of the faults they commit during that time. He is also called in to investigate allegations of immoral behaviour. The appointment is for life and it is hereditary, like that of the headman. In every village there are also two priests, who are responsible for maintaining right relations with the unseen world, but it will be more convenient to deal with their functions at a later stage.[2]

The humblest of the village officials is the *godet'*, the bailiff and messenger of the headman. When a child is born or a villager dies, it is the *godet'* who carries the news to all the houses. If it becomes necessary to summon the men of the village to a council to announce the near approach of a marriage party, or to collect dues from the houses for a feast in connection with a festival, it is the *godet's* duty to see that it is done. He is the errand boy, and consequently something of a butt for the wit of the village, as the following song (sung during the *Sohrae* festival) bears witness:

> Here comes the headman walking slowly,
> And here comes his deputy with wooden sandals,
> And also the *godet'* calling out to everyone.
>
> Put out a woven bed for the headman to sit on,
> Put out a wooden stool for his deputy,
> And put out for the *godet'* a broken bed.
>
> Pour out for the headman the first brew of beer,
> Pour out for his deputy the second brew,
> Pour out for the *godet'* the leavings.
>
> Give to the headman cakes of sifted flour,
> Give to his deputy some coarser cakes,
> And give to the *godet'* the lumpy bits.[3]

[1] See Appendix B, No. 1.
[2] See Appendix B, No. 2.
[3] See Chapter 7

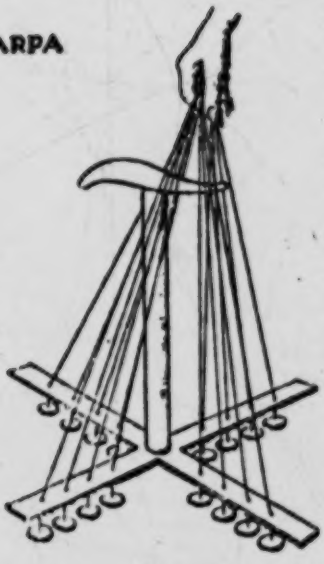
St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

doubtful whether the concept of monotony has any place in a Santal's mind. His love of a *porob*, or festival, is a byword in the tribe, and it is fostered by many occasions in the Santal calendar as well as by opportunities for "seeing", as they say, Hindu festivals. Some of these gatherings bring together the Santals from great distances. One of the most remarkable in the area takes place on the outskirts of Sarenga at the time of the Lakshmi Puja, at the full moon of the Bengali month of *Kartlik* (October-November). This is a Hindu festival, and it is kept with due pomp and ceremony by the family of the local landlord, who is of a mercantile caste. This family built up the celebration by inviting their Santal tenants to come and dance on a field on the village boundary. For many years it has been of more than local significance. Villagers from ten to fifteen miles away turn up in force, and some come from much greater distances. Until the year 1930 they used to dance and sing throughout the night, and on one occasion a missionary counted over five hundred large drums. In the following year a small but determined group of Santal reformers, one of whose aims was to stop their womenfolk from dancing in public, practically brought the gathering to a standstill, but it was revived in 1932 in the modified form in which it continues. At about noon the air begins to resound to the beating of the drums as parties of villagers make their way along the roads and jungle tracks and approach the scene of the gathering. From the four corners of the compass they converge on the open field, men and women in festive attire, the women especially resplendent in new *saris* with gaily designed borders, their hair bedecked with flowers and their arms heavy with ornaments. The drumming intensifies as new parties arrive and more and more lines of dancers are formed. Finally the crescendo of sound from the drums batters on the ear-drums of the bystanders, and even at a distance of four miles it conveys an impression of continuous thunder in the sky. Then the clamour dies away as gradually as it began, and by nine o'clock the field is quiet once again. Since the night dancing was stopped the numbers have diminished slightly. Most of the parties return to their own villages and continue the dance there.

The weeks are enlivened by visits to the local markets. One of the entries in Babulal's record relates to a market day during the early hot weather: "Today was market day. From a very early hour everyone was preparing to go to market. It is very hot at the present time, and if we do not go early the

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

SARPA



dances are preceded and ended by the shouting of obscene words. The Spring and the Harvest festivals possess their own cycle of songs and dances. During the latter the women make use of a musical instrument known as the *sarpa*, which is brought out only at this time. It is a percussion instrument that consists of a vertical pole about fifteen inches high fixed into two crossed horizontal pieces of wood. Holes are bored in the foot-long horizontal pieces, and through these holes pass lengths of string to the end of which are attached small circular wooden clappers. With the handle at the top of the vertical pole in the left hand and the upper end of the strings held in the right hand, the clappers can be drawn up sharply against the wooden bars, so producing a ringing sound. The workmanship of the *sarpas* varies; some are plain, while others display a handle carved in the shape of a dove and geometrical designs on the horizontal bars. The dancers form two lines; the older women form a line in front and sing and dance with their arms linked. Behind them comes a line of younger women, some of them beating the *sarpas*, some with small brass cymbals, while the two women at the ends of the line wave the end of their *saris* to fan the others.

The *buaŭ*[1] is a musical instrument associated particularly with the month that precedes that in which the Harvest festival is celebrated. This is the month known as *Dāsāĕ*, from the Hindi word *dasserah*. The *buaŭ* belongs to a type of musical instrument with a wide distribution in different parts of the world. Its prototype existed when men first plucked the strings of their bows in order to hear a pleasing sound. To the arc of the bow a large hollow gourd is attached, and this adds resonance to the sound of the plucked bow string. The gourd is

[1] See illustration opposite.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

decorated with paper streamers. One of the songs sung to the accompaniment of the *buaṅ* is in honour of the instrument itself and recounts the birth and growth of the gourd on the manure heap. Some of the dances enact hunting scenes and fights with bow and arrow.

BUAŃ

During weddings and festivals the dancing takes place at night as well as in the daytime. Drink is plentiful, and the dance goes on until the moon is setting and the first light of morning appears in the sky. At these times dancing is associated with romance as well as with illicit flirtations and unions; amid the general rejoicing it is easy for couples to slip away unnoticed. Dancing, however, is not by any means confined to the more formal and set occasions. During the hot season in particular there is an almost nightly gathering in some part of the village, when the younger members of the community dance together. At these times the *lagre*, a simple dance, is much used. Of this there are many variations, and different varieties appear to be popular in different localities. One of the most popular in the area is a variety of *lagre* known as *porob*, which appears to be unknown elsewhere. These dances are suitable for any occasion.[1]

Santal music is largely but not entirely associated with dancing. The Santals are a musical people and find in music an outlet for the emotional and imaginative sides of their nature. From an early age boys begin to play on a whistle, the high and plaintive notes of which can be heard coming from the fields and woods as the boys tend the herds. Later most of them become proficient in playing the flute. The name *tiriо* is used to denote different kinds of flute as well as the boys' whistle. Flutes contain six holes, and the usual type is the true flute that is held to one side—the instrument associated with Krishna in Hindu mythology. Some are beautifully made. One man playing at Sarenga during the Lakshmi Puja had a beautiful specimen; at the higher end there was a brass figure of Krishna playing the flute, while at the other end there was mounted a brass dove. Another type is shaped like an inverted T, the air being blown into the base of the T, while the arms,

[1] Bodding's *Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 331, lists thirty-one dances.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 43]

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

CHAPTER 6

MYTHS AND THE CLAN ORGANIZATION

773
182
614

MANY of the social activities of the Santals are based on myths, and the strength of their clan organization is due in no small measure to its foundations in mythology. An examination of the intimate relationship between the two bears out the truth of such a statement as: "The sacred lore of the tribe is not a fanciful tale told in explanation of natural phenomena and inexplicable events, but a method of expressing certain ways of thinking and feeling about the facts of life and of regulating human actions."[1] When for any reason a piece of ritual associated with a myth falls into disuse, knowledge of that myth begins to die out; conversely, when the myth is looked upon as outmoded, the activity with which it is linked begins to lose its hold on the people's imagination. The Santal story of the origin of man and the division of the human race into clans does not appear to be known today in more than outline form, except by a very few, mostly of the older generation. It is recited in the village only on certain occasions—the *caco chatiar* ceremony, at which a child is formally admitted into the privileges of full membership in the tribe; the *Jom Sim* festival, an occasional clan celebration; and the *Karam* festival, which is an affair of the village. None of these institutions has a vigorous life in the area; the *caco chatiar* ceremony of today retains only a vestige of its ancient glory, the *Jom Sim* is very rarely performed, and the same is true of the *Karam* in its full form.[2] The village headman has to recite the myth, but not every headman now is capable of doing so. The decay of the ritual is leading to the disappearance of the ancient myth. It is nevertheless still true that these stories do reveal the Santal view of the world. When they are told they call forth assent, and frequently in ordinary conversation the myths are cited in order to point a moral or clinch an argument. Though there are few who are ready to recite the whole story, some part of it is still familiar to everyone.

• [196]

773
[114]
[13]

The Santal story of the origin of man has been recorded in slightly varying form by different authorities.[3] It did not escape

[1] E. O. James, *Comparative Religion*, Methuen, 1938, p. 333.

[2] *Further reference is made to these festivals in the chapter on "Festivals".*

[3] The fullest account in English is in *Traditions and Institutions of the Santals*, translated with notes and additions by P. O. Bodding from the Santali text published in 1887 by L. O. Skrefsrud, edited (after the translator's death) by Sten Konow. Oslo, 1942.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

they are touching the blue eggs of the *jihu* bird. The Hāsdāk' do not even touch a goose, and they will not take water from a tank in which geese or ducks are swimming at the time. Binu used to say that he had to perform four different sub-clan sacrifices. To two of the spirits pigs were sacrificed in the cowshed at the time of the *Sohrae*, to another spirit they sacrificed a goat in the house at the end of the *Sohrae*, and to the fourth they sacrificed a ram on the open land outside the village at the time of the Spring festival. The Kaṛwar Hāsdāk' tell the story of how long ago their ancestors were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and all the Hāsdāk' were present. They had performed the sacrifices and everyone had been served with rice and meat, but some of the younger folk present felt that they had not been given enough to eat, so they killed a buffalo and served that as well. The family of the one who slew the buffalo, or *kaḍa*, became known as Kaṛwar Hāsdāk'. They sacrifice a pig, a white hen and a brown hen at the time of the *Sohrae*; the rite is performed inside the house at sunset, and they must finish eating the flesh during the night, burying whatever is left over in the dung heap. The Hatibari[1] Hāsdāk' sacrifice either a white hen or a ram to their sub-clan spirit. This should be done out in the open beside a white ant hill, but, like some others, they now bring a piece of earth from the ant hill into their cowshed. Like the Nij Maṛṇḍi, of whom this is also true, they may not be vaccinated, but their womenfolk may be tattooed.

The Jihu Hāsdāk' are not allowed to brand their cattle. There seems little reason to doubt the fact that most of the clans use distinctive marks in branding their cattle. Bodding has affirmed of the *ḍhera dag*, or cross, that although it is used as a mark of ownership of cattle "it is not restricted to any sept or sub-sept".[2] (The word "clan" has been adopted in this book in preference to "sept".) In the Bankura district, however, many of the branding marks are definitely associated with the clans, and the marks correspond to those recorded by Charulal Mukherjea in Mayurbhanj.[3] The marks printed on the opposite page have been noticed in Bankura.

The Guą or Betel nut Hembrom constitute one of the most numerous of the Hembrom sub-clans. Of them it is said that "a few days after the ancestors had been divided into clans, one of the Hembrom was born at the foot of a betel nut tree. When he

[1] Literally "elephant house", but the name may refer to a locality.
[2] *Santali Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 424.
[3] Charulal Mukherjea, *The Santals*, p. 77.

5t Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

CHAPTER 9

FESTIVALS

THE two great village festivals take place in the spring and after the harvest. The name of the former, *Baha*, means "Flower festival". It is held after the full moon in the month of *Phalgun* (February-March). The hot season is about to begin, sap is rising in the trees, and the *sarjom* is resplendent with blossom and tender green leaves. Until the festival has taken place the women do not gather the *matkom* blossoms which provide them with both food and drink. It is held on different days in different villages so that the celebrations can be accompanied by a round of visits to relatives. The opening day of all festivals is a day of purification, known as "bathing day". On this day at the time of the Spring festival two temporary sheds are put up in the sacred grove and the young men carry out a hunt in the woods near the village. The priest completes his preparations and bathes certain articles in the waters of the village tank. At sunset three hens are taken to his house by the villagers, who remain there to dance. Three of the young men become spirit-possessed. One impersonates the "Five", another the Old Lady of the Sacred Grove, and the third takes the part of *Maraṅ Buru*; they seize the implements which the priest has purified earlier in the day and make play with them. The priest receives them with respect; he washes their legs and, addressing the spirits, he asks for good fortune during the coming year. When this is over the young men are recalled to their senses by a series of sharp taps on their backs. Dancing is continued throughout the night in the village street just outside the priest's house.

In the early afternoon of the following day the priest is accompanied by the villagers in a singing procession to the sacred grove. On arrival there the same young men are again possessed and run away across the fields, being chased and brought back by the rest of the young men. The priest now assumes an attitude of great humility towards them. He receives them with a cloth tied round his neck in token of the submission of the village to the spirits. The hens are sacrificed and cooked in a hash with rice. The priest and his wife partake of one and the men of the village consume the rest of the food, after which everyone returns home except the priest. He has to remain in the grove until the young men return to escort him. He is then taken to every house in turn and received with great honour. His feet are

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

His feet are washed in each house and he receives presents of grain and beer. The subsequent merrymaking dies down during the night. The celebration is completed on the following day, when the co-priest offers drops of his own blood to the boundary spirits.

The following account of the Spring festival held in Barikul in 1939 was recorded by Babulal at the time, and it conveys, as no outside account could, the atmosphere of the festival. He begins:

"*March* 17. Today is the bathing day for the Flower festival. Early in the morning the bailiff called everyone to make the booths ready in the sacred grove. The women were busy boiling their clothes. One young man from every house took part in the thatching of the booths; some brought *sarjom* branches from the jungle, and others made small wooden seats for the spirits. The priest washed all the things for the spirits' house—the bangles, the necklace, a bow and arrow, an axe, also basket, broom, bells and horns—and he brought back to his house an earthen pot of water for luck. The place of sacrifice was smeared with cowdung, and oil and vermilion were placed there in readiness. When the young men had finished the thatching they bathed, and then said to the bailiff: 'We go now to Somadungri for the flower hunt; see that the drums beat and the horns sound at the foot of the banyan tree, for when we hear them we shall start. Do not delay, for we want to begin.' The bailiff completed his bath quickly, and taking four youths with the drums and the horns to the banyan tree by the stone fence he did as he had been requested. And so the youths went out hunting. They caught fourteen hares, thirteen jungle fowl, four partridges and ten squirrels. These they brought home hanging from a pole which was slung from the shoulders of two men. When they arrived back at the side of the large tank, the spoils were divided, and some we gave to the men of neighbouring villages who had joined in the hunt. The flesh was roasted and divided; some was given to the killers, some to the dogs, some to the villagers, and a special portion to the widows.

In the evening the bailiff called everyone to gather for the 'spirit possession'. We took three new winnowing fans and all collected at the priest's house. Three men were possessed, and each of them took hold of a winnowing fan. They were seated facing the east, and the priest put sun-dried rice on to the winnowing fan of *Marak Buru*. Immediately to his left sat *Manjhi*

51 Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

haṛam,[1] and on the left of *Mạñjhi haṛam* there sat the Old Lady 796
of the Grove, and to them also rice was given. The spirits spoke 787
and shook the rice in the winnowing fans. Then they began to shake their heads from side to side, and called out, '*His-sạhāk!*' At this everyone called out, 'Greetings, Lords!' for the spirits had come. The Old Lady of the Grove placed the necklace round her neck, put on the bangles, seized the broom and put the washed basket on her head, and then ran away to the grove. *Marañ Buru* and *Mạñjhi haṛam* went after her with the bow and arrows and the axe, and in the darkness the Old Lady lost her necklace and the bangles. When they all ran back to the priest's house and the loss was discovered we told her that she must find them again. So she went once more to the grove and brought them back. After this we said to all of them: 'The horses are weary; let the spirit riders descend!' The priest then applied vermilion on their cheeks, their chests and their backs, and they came to their senses. So it ended. Next the villagers began to dance, and the 796
first song was this: [539]

> High up in the *pipal*[2] tree
> Sings the crimson-breasted barbet;
> It wanders through the country,
> It flies over the land.[3]

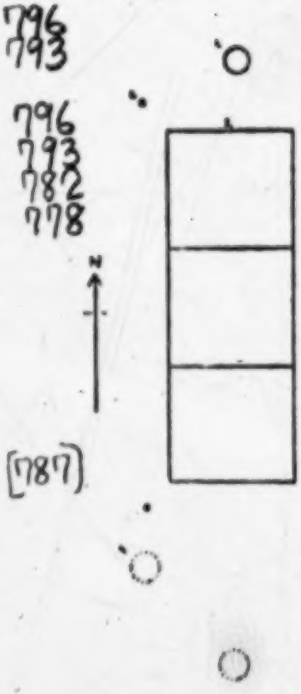
Then they began the late evening dance and many other dances, such as the road dance, and they sang:

> Down in the valley blooms the *haḷ*[4] tree, sister; [539]
> Come, let us make flower chains, sister;
> Come, let us wear the flowers, dangling.[5]

The priest spent the night sleeping on a bed of leaves, while 796
everyone else, old and young, men and women, danced the 793
night through. Next morning the priest told the bailiff quickly to collect the hens; he himself bathed and went to the grove, taking with him *sarjom* and *matkom* flowers, sun-dried rice, flour, oil and vermilion, all in a new winnowing fan. He also carried a brown hen and on his open upturned palm a small

[1] *Mạñjhi haṛam* is the title that denotes the founder of the village. Possibly in Barikul he is honoured instead of the "Five", though it might be Babulal's mistake.
[2] Santali *hesah' dare*; *Ficus religiosa*, L.
[3] See Appendix B, No. 16.
[4] A small tree, *Holarrhena antidysenterica*, Wall.
[5] See Appendix B, No. 17.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42



brass water-pot, while his wife carried the earthen pot of water brought for good fortune. Youths and maidens conducted him to the grove, dancing as they went, and there he began to make the sacrifice. The youths and the maidens danced in the grove, the young men singing only the Flower dance songs, and while the dancing went on the priest proceeded with his work. With the flour he made the circles and the squares. A hen was offered in each of the circles; the brown hen was slain in the Moslem[1] fashion, while the other two had their necks cut. Again each of the spirits took possession of a man, and they sucked the blood of the slain birds. One circle was for *Marak Buru*, one for the Old Lady of the Grove, and one for *Manjhi haram*. In the squares the priest sacrificed to the village spirits, and as we had brought many hens it was not possible to offer them all, so some were killed by knocking their heads on the ground. When it was all over, the priest cooked the heads of the first three hens with flour, making cakes of them, and then ate them and drank beer. This is called 'lifting the head'. Then the folk in the village who offer to the 'Five' took flowers from the trees of the grove, returned to their own houses and made mounds of the flowers. Near these mounds they offered either hens or goats. (Some of those who worship the 'Five' invite all their relatives at this time and make the sacrifice in the grove.) Meanwhile the priest drank beer and cooked a hash of rice with the brown hen.

Late in the afternoon the young men went to receive the priest back into the village. They went dancing to the grove and *danced round* the priest. Again the spirits took possession of the three young men, who danced with the others. The Old Lady again wore the bangles and the necklace and carried the

[1] This is Babulal's word. The offering to *Manjhi haram* is strangled and not beheaded.

54 Culshaw M-5 (1942-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

basket on her head; likewise *Marak Buru* took the bow and arrows and *Manjhi haram* held the axe. Just before sunset the men came to their senses, the priest gathered up all the things, and his wife carried the lucky water-pot. As before, the youths and maidens placed the priest in their midst and again the spirits came and danced with the others. Then in every house, from one end of the village street to the other, they washed the feet of the priest. He put *sarjom* flowers into the hair of the girls who washed his feet, and all the people sprinkled water on to each other. On that day we are free to sprinkle water on anyone else.[1] When we reached the priest's house he poured out two pots of beer and we all drank. Again the dancing began and went on till a late hour.

March 18. Yesterday was the full Flower festival day; today is the 'stale'-day of the feast. Yesterday everyone was drunk, and again today they began to drink early. There were many visitors in the village, for we had invited daughters, sisters and sons-in-law to be with us. We had to feed them well, and we were busy with all the preparations. One prepared rice, another flour, while the men killed cocks or goats or pigs, for yesterday they had no time to feast well. Even so, in some of the houses a few people became drunk before they had time to eat. Those unfortunates had no meat either yesterday or today. Most of the time went in feasting, though there was some dancing in the village street, and the dancers sang:

> Let us gather, O elder sister, the *matkom*;
> Let us wear the *sarjom* flowers, elder sister, in our hair;
> Let us drink, O elder sister, the juice of the *matkom*.[2]

Most of the singing was done by a small band of old men and women who went into each of the houses and were given beer and *matkom* flowers by the people of the house. In our part of the village there was a fierce quarrel. Some of the men who went to stop the trouble were themselves beaten and returned very angry to their homes. Before midnight everyone was fast asleep, for all had been drinking heavily. I thought to myself, if anyone came here tonight with evil intent he could steal anything he wanted with the greatest ease; and, in fact, that is what happened. During the night someone stole from the headman's house five goats, male and female."

[1] Water "squirts" are made from bamboo and are used freely.
[2] See Appendix II, No. 18.

:e Culshaw M-S (1902-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

•796 539 (115) Having given his account of the festival, Babulal then proceeds with the following account of the myth which carries back the origin of the observance to the period of the wanderings:

"It is said that at one time our ancestors were moving from one place to another for fear of Mirja Turuk.[1] During that period they lost their 'religion'.[2] When it was realized, one man from each of the twelve clans went out in search of it. Now the names of those who went out on this quest, taking with them an uncastrated goat, a *Lita*[3] pig and some rice in a basket, were as follows: Ap'ñambondak', Hutumñambañjak', Narkakin cede—these were two—Ote and Bole, and some others. They assembled in the Somoe valley in the forest of Siñ, and there they remained for twelve years. The feathery grass of that place all died, but none of them wished to go on farther to look for their 'religion'. All of them held back; they said one to another: 'You go first.' In the end, Ote and Bole said in desperation: 'All right, we shall lead the way.' Going farther, they entered the Man forest. The other ten followed them, but when they came into the forest they could not find Ote and Bole. They searched the whole forest through without success. Some of them at length found some footprints, whereupon they sang this song:

Look here, look at this,
The footprints of the *nilgae*;
Look here, look at this,
The footprints of the wild buffalo.

In what forest have they entered,
The footprints of the *nilgae*?
To what forest do they lead,
The footprints of the wild buffalo?

Into the forest of Man have they entered,
The footprints of the *nilgae*;
To the forest of Siñ have they led,
The footprints of the wild buffalo.[4]

[1] The now mythical Moslem ruler, mentioned also in Chapter 2, p. 24.
[2] An abbreviated account of this myth is given in Chapter 6, p. 66, where the word translated by "religion" is translated as "the right way to live".
[3] The meaning of this is not clear. *Lita* is the proper name of *Marak Buru* (see Chapter 7, p. 81).
[4] See Appendix B, No. 19.

Culshaw M-S (1902-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

796 • 539

However, they could not find Ote and Bole; they searched everywhere, but they saw no tracks but the tracks of the *nilgae* and the wild buffalo. Nowadays the Santals say that the Ote and Bole who were then lost have become the ancestors of the 'sahibs'. One reason why we say this is that often when we are beginning to dance and at the commencement of songs someone calls out these words: 'Look, friends, the white hare has run away.'[1] This saying is the signal to begin the dance. The word 'sahib' is amongst us for a long time; in many ways our customs are the same."

829

This rather obscure piece of reasoning is in fact widely current among the Santals, at any rate among those who are unfamiliar with the origin of the word "sahib" and its currency in India during Moslem times. "White hare" is a term often applied to Englishmen. On one occasion I emerged rather suddenly from the waiting-room at a wayside station on to the platform near to where a group of Santal women were unloading a railway wagon. Unaware that I might understand their conversation, one of the women remarked, "The white hare has just come out of its hole!" greatly to the amusement of her companions. Babulal relates at this point how the brothers were met in the forest by *Maraa Buru* and led by him to the foot of various trees.[2] Babulal places the story in Moslem times. He makes the following remarks about *Maraa Buru* and his actions: "*Maraa Buru* deceived them so that when they wanted to offer sacrifices to *Thakur* they should do it in his name, afterwards to the Old Lady of the Grove, and then to the 'Five and Six'. In former days he used to be called *Lita godet'*, *Lita* the bailiff. *Maraa Buru* became the guardian of the ancestors. He used to take them out hunting and taught them how to kill iguanas, water-snakes, squirrels, mongoose and hares. On such days as they caught nothing in the chase he used to show them the dead cattle at the end of the village street, and would say to them: 'It is quite all right for us to eat these too; these are white deer.' And so we began to eat all these things."

[123]

796 539

He offers some more information about the Flower festival in his narrative: "In the prayer at the time of the Flower sacrifice we must use these words in addressing the spirits: 'If you are not pleased with the offering we shall dishonour your mother.' We consider that the spirits will listen to us if we use these words. We also say that if we urinate in a standing

796 782

[1] Another form of this saying is given in Chapter 6, p. 67.

[2] See Chapter 6, p. 66.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

We also say that if we urinate in a standing position the Flower spirits will be pleased. For this reason, if anyone sees us urinating in a standing position and scolds us for it we reply: 'We are making offerings to the Flower spirits!' The Flower festival is for flowers and fruits what the offering of new rice is for rice. Until the priest has placed flowers in the hair of the women and eaten some of the *matkom*, no one will wear flowers or eat the *matkom*. From the new year until after the festival the priest has to live very carefully. He eats nothing in other people's houses, because others may have been on a visit to villages where the festival has already taken place and then he might eat something that is forbidden. One of the songs that is sung when the priest is being escorted to the grove and again back to his house refers to the fact that the Dol Jatra festival of the Hindus has already taken place.[1]

'The Dol is over now, maidens, the *Pata*[2] comes next;
You must buy shields, maidens, for yourselves.

In the maidens' pubic region is the black bee's honeycomb;
You must buy shields, maidens, for yourselves.' "[3]

The second great festival is celebrated when all the harvest has been gathered in and there is plenty of food. The Santals say that for one month after the Harvest festival, known as the *Sohrae*, they eat rice without measuring it. Although it may be held at any time during the period between the dark night in October-November and the middle of January, in most of the villages of the area it is now celebrated at the earliest possible date, when Hindus are celebrating the Kali Puja. One reason is to enable those who are migrating for work to share in it before they depart, and some of the villagers distinguish between this fixed festival and a true *Sohrae* fixed in the traditional manner. In a bad year a Santal remarked: "This year we shall have no *Sohrae*. There has been no harvest, so what would we eat and how could we invite our friends?" The words were spoken while the village in question was actually celebrating the festival at Kali Puja time. Further, the celebration of Kali Puja amongst the surrounding cultivator castes, and especially the Bauri, has many features in common with the Santal cult, particularly with reference to cattle worship, and this factor has undoubtedly led the Santals to approximate the time of their celebrations to that of their neighbours.

[1] See Chapter 7, p. 99.
[2] See Appendix II, No. 40.
[3] The hook-swinging festival.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

On the evening before the appointed day the village bailiff delivers the sacrificial hens, two white hens and one brown, to the priest's house. The priest observes his customary abstinence during that night, sleeping on the bare floor. Next morning the bailiff makes a collection of one hen from each house in the village, together with rice, salt and the various spices that are needed to cook a curry. It is the duty of the priest's wife to grind the flour that will be needed for "cakes"; his sister may perform this work only if she is unmarried. In the morning the priest constructs the sacred squares and circles on a piece of ground previously plastered with cowdung. The sacrifices are performed at noon, and these are in some cases offered in the sacred grove, but in some villages they are offered by the side of a stream or on the bank of one of the artificial lakes that abound. The sacred place is made from north to south, as in the case of the Flower festival, and the procedure is the same. First of all rice is sprinkled in the enclosures and some vermilion is placed on the rice. The birds are fed on the rice, water is sprinkled over them, and vermilion is smeared on their heads, their wings and their legs. When the sacrifice is complete, the priest eats the flesh of the heads, while the men of the village feast on a hash made from the rest of the flesh, and drink and sing.

The distinctive feature of the sacrifice is that, before the hens are offered, an egg is placed standing upright on a small pile of rice in one of the squares, and all the herdboys of the village are summoned to bring the cattle. The priest places vermilion on their goad sticks, and they drive their cattle across the enclosure in which the egg is standing until one of the cattle tramples upon and breaks the egg. This is the signal for an outburst of cheering and excitement. The cow or bull is garlanded and anointed with vermilion on its horns and its head. Sometimes the boy is carried shoulder high to the village headman, before whom he makes a deep obeisance, afterwards saluting the other men of the village. When the villagers return to the houses in the late afternoon they are supplied with beer in the priest's house, after which they visit the headman's house for the same purpose, and so on from one house to another. It is at this time that the youths and young women visit the home of the *jogmajhi* and request him to turn a blind eye to their doings for the duration of the festival. The whole period is characterized by its freedom from traditional morality. The rules of avoidance are treated lightly, and many liberties are taken with members of the opposite sex.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

of the opposite sex. On the first night the young people go through the village conducting the ceremony known as "waking the cattle". There is much drumming and dancing outside each of the cowsheds, and the cattle are feasted and decorated; small white circles made of flour are painted on their hides, vermilion is placed on their horns and heads. When all the cattle in the village have been "wakened", the young men go round once more for the "blessing" of the cattle. They are garlanded and fed with sweetmeats, and the blessing is pronounced as a hope that they will be protected from the dangers of disease and witchcraft, from thieves and the depredations of wild animals during the coming year. This "blessing" is pronounced by the women.

Other ceremonies are performed on the following days. The whole celebration may last either for three or for five days. At one time during the festival the young men of the village lock the bailiff in his home, and he is not allowed to come out until he has promised to treat them all to a drink of beer. During the second day of the festival the sub-clans perform the sacrifices to their *ahge* spirits. These sacrifices are also preceded by ceremonial bathing on the part of the members of the households concerned, and the men take to the waterside their hunting implements, bows and arrows, axes and spears. The head of the house officiates, and the sacrificial animals are set apart in the same way as for the village sacrifices, having vermilion in oil placed on their heads, their shoulders and their hoofs. The flesh of the animals is, however, cooked separately from the rice with which it is eaten. On the second day also the cattle are baited. A bull is tied to a post, and the group of men who gather round it begin to infuriate the beast by persistent drumming. One or two of the men at a time, holding before them the skin of a dead animal, engage in mock combat with the bull, leaping at it and inciting it to plunge at them with its horns. The pastime continues for several hours and sometimes results in accidents. It is a happy season for the herdboys; they receive presents of cloth and are well fed by their masters. On the last night of the festival the unmarried men and girls sleep at the house of the *jogmanjhi* in token of the fact that their period of licence is at an end.

The remaining festivals of the Santal year do not make the same stir throughout the countryside. *Mokor* is the name used in the area by Santals and non-Santals alike for the festival which takes place in mid-January. In some places it is called

5t Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

the *Sakrat*. At this time offerings are made to the ancestors in each house, and the celebration is accompanied by a display of stick dancing, which has replaced the former "sword and shield" dance. At the end of the following month the *Mag Sim*, the hen at the end of the month of *Mag*, is offered. In former times the village officials used to resign at this time and could be either replaced or reappointed, but the only relic of the old practice that has survived is that the headman has to treat the whole village to beer. Contracts with servants are renewed during the festival, and they receive the cloth that is always a part of the contract. In connection with rice cultivation there is the *Erok' Sim*, the hen that is offered at the time of sowing, and *Nawâi*, when the first fruits of the first rice crop are offered in the sacred grove. Before this takes place the new rice must not be eaten. The village priest cuts the first handful of the crop and offers some at the foot of each of the chief trees. A sprig is also tied round the trunk of the trees and remains there. While the prayer is being said, milk is poured on the offering. After the priest has done his part, similar offerings are made in every house to the house spirits and the ancestors, the rice being taken from the crops belonging to the family. In varying degrees the Santals share in some of the festivals and practices of the low-caste cultivators around them. In the early monsoon days, during the period of *Rohini*, which is an auspicious time for sowing rice, they make a mark round their houses with cowdung as a protection against snakes. The snake goddess festival occurs in late August, and although its observance is not widespread among the Santals there are some local celebrations, especially when there is an *ojha* in the village. The *ojhas* all keep this festival, and others go to them at this time to ask for medicines against snakebite. Some Hindu festivals, as we have seen, furnish the occasion for large gatherings of Santals. At Sarenga, in addition to the Lakshmi Puja, a somewhat smaller gathering takes place during the hot weather in connection with the celebration of the Siva Gajon at a local temple. At this time the Charak, or hook-swinging festival, otherwise known as the *Pata*, takes place. The practice has almost died out within the last fifteen years. It had been prohibited by the government, but as long as the old generation, which was accustomed to the practice, remained it continued with gradually diminishing fervour. The Santals gather now to sing and to dance. They also join the throngs of pilgrims, sightseers and traders who collect at the Bogri *mela*, or fair,

Sr Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

796 some thirty miles from Sarenga. This fair, which is one of the most famous in Western Bengal, takes place at the time of the Dol Jatra near a temple dedicated to Krishna. The last day of the *mela* is chiefly renowned for the fact that on that day there is a great concourse of Santals for dancing.

171 177 One festival which is shared with tribes living right across Central India[1] is the *Karam*. The fact that it is not peculiar to them is known to the Santals, and one informant once told me that they must have borrowed it from the Mahato. He had seen that the Mahato celebrated it and knew of the special relationship between the Mahato and his own people. Many of the songs contain references to Ram and Lokhon, heroes of the *Ramayana*. The festival is rather difficult to characterize, for its celebration takes different forms and arises from different causes. It is connected in all cases with the desire for prosperity, but it may be either a public or a private celebration. The *karam* is a tree[2] that is associated with the god Krishna in the *Vishnu Purana*. When a shoot of this tree is found growing in the land round a house or springing from the roof thatch, the head of that house is responsible for instituting an annual celebration of the festival. The fact that while it is celebrated annually in a great many villages it is not found invariably is perhaps accounted for by its accidental origin. The festival is also associated with certain other definite events. In some cases 156 the leading celebrant is the local *ojha*, who holds a *Karam* festival at the beginning of the month of *Dàsàï* and before he sends out his disciples on their annual begging expedition. 622 764 Sometimes it is celebrated in connection with the appointment of the new headman of a village, and sometimes in connection with the death ceremonies of a man of substance. Sometimes it is associated with the *Mak' Mòñ*, an occasional sacrifice to the 782 "Five". These spirits are peculiarly liable to become offended, and offerings are made to them to avert their wrath, which takes the form of inflicting a poor harvest or an epidemic. Whatever the occasion may be, the celebration of the *Karam* is regarded as an insurance either on behalf of a particular family or on behalf of the whole village. It may be either a way of enhancing good fortune or of warding off evil. Where in the area it has become an annual festival it is held at the full moon in the month of *San* (July-August). At sunset the un-

113 [1] References to Central India are to be found in *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*, by V. Elwin, Oxford University Press, pp. 3–11.

[2] *Adinia cordifolia*, Hook., f. and B.

at Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

At sunset the unmarried men of the village bathe and then go to the nearby forest, from which they cut and bring back two branches of the *karam* tree. These branches, known as "virgin" *karam*, are set upright in two holes dug for the purpose. A piece of cloth is placed over the branches and a small light is lit in front of them. After the preliminary dancing one of the village elders recites the myth of the *Karam*, beginning from the creation myth; the story of the origin of the world is ordinarily referred to as the *Karam hinti*. The recital is followed by another dance, which lasts through the night and is changed at cockcrow. The celebration continues till sunrise, when the branches are taken down to the water near the village by the same young men who brought them from the forest on the evening before. The youths immerse themselves, and the branches are floated away in a manner similar to that employed in floating away the bones of the dead.

The myth relates the story of the *Karam* to their own tribal history, and, as one finds in all Santal myths, memories of early wanderings are prominent. The following version was related by Durlob Murmu,[1] and it forms a continuation to the creation story:

"The name of Pilcu Haram and Pilcu Budhi's eldest son was Karmu Senor Sin. The eldest daughter was Hisi. They had two sons, who were called Karmu and Dharmu. Now Karmu was of the Häsdäk' clan, and their maternal uncles were the Kisku *rajas* and the Marndi rich men. The Kisku lived at Campagor and the Marndi lived at Cirulagor,[2] and between the two villages flowed the Sitanala river. The people from both villages used to go to the river for their bathing and drinking water. There was a quarrel between them over a bride, and while the fight was on the Kisku killed the father of Karmu and Dharmu. After this they fell into great want. One day they went out to beg and were on the way to Campanagar. They came to the banks of a river, and Dharmu lay down at the foot of a *karam* tree and fell asleep. The name of the river was Tatijhari—it was the place where *Marak Baru* had first woven cloth garments. Below that place he had made a small embankment, and that place was called the Sadoyar valley; just below it he had bathed, and so the place was known as Bathing river. That river had sprung from the Lope mountain hard by the Bel banyan tree, and its waters flowed towards the sunrise.

[1] See Chapter 6, p. 65, footnote 1. [2] Cf. reference in Chapter 6, p. 72.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

539
796

At the foot of that tree *Karam Gôsâi* appeared to Dharmu in a dream. He spoke to Dharmu thus: 'Eya Dharmu, plant a *karam* tree. Make a drum from the leaves. Bow to it and salute it three times; then dance round it. By the side of the river there is a cow with calf; by a heap of stones near a clump of *sirom* grass there is a turban cloth, and in a hillock by the river there is a flute. Bring all those things here.' As soon as Dharmu awoke he planted the *karam*. Then he saw that a cow with calf had appeared on the spot. He fetched the turban and the flute, and putting the turban on his head he took the cow back to his home. When he arrived there his old mother told him to bring some turmeric and water in a pot and to wash the legs of the cow as well as her legs, and in that way he paid respect to the cow. He handed the turban and the flute to his mother and asked her to care for them, and then he tied up the cow. After that Dharmu went to the river every day, taking the cow with him. He used to plant a branch of the *karam* and dance round it. *Karam Gôsâi* blessed the family, and their cattle increased so that they became rich. One day the mother spoke to both her sons: 'Eya Karmu and Dharmu, a *karam* has sprouted in our thatch. The paddy seeds in the store are sprouting and *dhubi* grass is growing in the sun-dried rice. It wants but three days till the full moon of *San*. Fix a *karam* branch in front of our house on that day and invite all the neighbours.' When all the neighbours had gathered, Karmu asked two of the unmarried girls to plaster the earth round the *karam* branch with cowdung. Dharmu cut two branches of a *karam* tree, planted them in the ground, went down on his knees three times and saluted them. Their mother brought some sun-dried rice in a plate from the house, some *dhubi* grass, clarified butter and the piece of cloth dyed in turmeric. She placed the cloth on the twigs and swathed it round the branches. Then she also did obeisance three times and returned to the house.

Then the mother and the two sons spoke together: 'We have planted a *karam*, but how shall we dance?' Then they sang the following song:

An ape you will slay, my sons, then what will you do?
The ape that we slay, mother, we shall skin.

The skin you will take, my sons, then what will you do?
With the skin we take, mother, we shall cover a drum.

St Culshaw M-S (1902-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

539.796

With the drum that you cover, my sons, what will you do?
To the sound of the drum, mother, we shall plant the *karam*.

Round the *karam* that you plant, my sons, what will you dance?
Round the *karam* we plant, mother, (the dance will be) *Goñet' niphur dañdahi mathayet'*.[1]

And so they danced from sunset till just before sunrise. Then two unmarried youths plucked up the *karam* branches. They carried them to the spring which was beyond the end of the village street and floated them down the stream after first immersing them under the water and offering them towards the rising sun. All who had taken part bathed and returned to their homes, and the cloth was given to a poor woman of the village.

Dharmu continued to dance round the *karam* every day and did not do his share of tending the cattle. At this his brother Karmu became annoyed. He plucked up the *karam* with his left hand and flung it on to a dungheap, and from that time their fortunes changed. At last they became so poor that they were working for a rich man, planting out his paddy seedlings. Whatever they gained for themselves disappeared at once, and so they could make no profit.[2] Their employer told them: 'Never mind, you will get some tomorrow.' But when the same thing had happened for three days in succession the brothers fell into a rage and said: 'Come on, let us pluck out all the paddy seedlings that we have planted.' While they were on their way to the fields they passed an old man, who stopped to ask them the way. When they had told him he asked them where they were going, and in reply they told him everything. He urged them: 'Do not do that, for it will make *Cando* very angry. All this has happened because of your sin. You should seek for *Karam Gösäi*, whom you will find by the Condon mountain on the shores of the sea. He is a leper. Go and worship him. And mind, you will find that there are other holy men where he is; do not worship them.' They turned back in their tracks, and when they looked round again they saw that the old man had vanished, so they knew at once that it was *Cando* who had come to speak with them.

They set out forthwith on their journey. They came to a

[1] See Appendix II, No. 21.

[2] The method of payment for this work is for the labourer to receive a proportion of seedlings, which he can then plant in his own fields.

N Gulshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

539
796

village, and before entering it they sat down to rest at the foot of an old jackfruit tree. The name of that village was Ujarḍi. Karmu told Dharmu to go and beg some food in the village, as he was hungry, so Dharmu went and fetched back some flour, but when they had soaked it they found that they could not eat, for it was full of worms. Then the jackfruit tree spoke to them and asked them where they were going. They replied: 'We search for *Karam Gôsâi*.' The tree replied: 'Then tell him about me. Some men have buried treasure here at my roots, and I am tired of watching it.' They went on and came to the Ajoy forest, where they found a cow with calf. Farther on they came to a mango tree, and Karmu told Dharmu to gather mangoes. They divided the mangoes out and took off the skins, but they were unable to eat the fruit, as it was full of worms. On they went and came to the village of Jhalḍa, where there lived a rich man. This man asked the brothers where they were going, to which they replied: 'We seek *Karam Gôsâi*.' 'Then', said he, 'tell *Karam Gôsâi* about me. I am tired of looking after all my possessions.' Later they arrived at the village of Khajpur, where there dwelt a rich man with very many head of cattle. When they had told him that they were seeking *Karam Gôsâi* he said to them: 'Then tell *Karam Gôsâi* about me, for I am tired of looking after all my herds.'

After many such happenings they came at last to the leper who dwelt by the Condon mountain on the shores of the sea, and they saluted the feet of *Karam Gôsâi*. He told them to salute also the good men who were around him, but they refused and said: 'No, we have come to you and we want to take you with us.' When *Karam Gôsâi* had heard everything that they had to tell him he blessed them and taught them thus: 'Never do things without consulting other folk. Plant a *karam* branch every day and do no sin.' Then they told him all the messages that had been given to them as they came along the road, and *Karam Gôsâi* then said to Karmu and Dharmu: 'Say this word to all of them. If they will give what is in their keeping either to a Brahmin or a Vaishnava, good fortune will attend them.' They set out on their return journey, taking *Karam Gôsâi* with them, and as they met the people they told them what *Karam Gôsâi* had said. Each of them replied: 'And where are we to find a Brahmin or a Vaishnava? You two are the Brahmin and the Vaishnava and to you we shall give what we possess.' And so as they returned to their home they collected many head of cattle, buffaloes, cows, goats and money. As soon as they reached home

Sir Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

539
796

they did as they had been told by *Karam Gôsâi*; they planted a *karam* branch and once more they became exceedingly rich."

"Nowadays", concludes the narrative, "we do not set up the branch in that way, but even to this day in many villages the branch is planted on the night of the full moon of the month of *Sun*, and they do it because this was ordered by *Karam Gôsâi*."

796

Each festival, as it comes, serves to enliven the toil of the villager, and when it has passed it remains often as a signpost in the memory. Mothers recall that their children were born before or after a festival; the month is remembered even when the year has been forgotten. On the religious side the festivals bind the community to the tribal spirits and to the ancestors; the offering is shared by all the men and so makes each one conscious of communion with the spirits as well as with his fellow villagers. They also serve to keep alive the myths and songs, the games and dances, and so help the Santal to give full reign to his love of pleasure.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

BIRTH AND INITIATION

Society takes little notice of the child before it is born, but, through the person of the father, the family and the clan begin to assert their interests. The restrictions enjoined on the father suggest that although his rôle in the heredity of the child is considered to be a relatively minor one, he is nevertheless an instrument through which the future child may be brought into danger and so hurt the interests of the family. During the period of his wife's pregnancy he must strictly observe the rule against taking life and he must avoid all contact with dead bodies. He is therefore excused from all participation in funeral ceremonies; he may not help to carry a corpse or even enter a house in which a death has taken place. If the annual hunt falls during the period he is allowed to accompany the men of the village, but he is not allowed to kill or to carry a slain animal or bird. He must not eat flesh from the head of any animal slain in the hunt or offered in sacrifices.[1] He is not separated from his wife, and my information suggests that intercourse is usual up to about the sixth month. There is a very strong sentiment against a man having sexual intercourse with another woman during his wife's pregnancy. There appears to be no rule as to when intercourse may be resumed after the birth of the child. The women speculate concerning the sex of the coming child. If the mother begins to look sickly, and especially if she becomes thin round the neck, it is a sign that she will have a boy. Although the "quickening" is not marked by any ceremonial, it is recognized as a definite stage in the life of both the new individual and of the mother. When a woman dies with child the procedure to be followed varies according to whether the death has followed the first quickening or not.[2]

Midwives are engaged for the delivery. They are to be found in every large Santal village, and they are generally old women, themselves grandmothers. They receive no special training, but they develop the "knack" for their work by assisting others, and they launch out on their own practice when they have established a reputation for being handy and capable. The midwife may be someone connected with the family, but, if so, she should

[1] Bodding, in the *Santals Dictionary* (Vol. III, p. 337), reports a custom in connection with the *Jom Sim* festival which accords a certain status to the child before birth. I have been unable to confirm his statement. He says that when the *Jom Sim* is observed in the family of a pregnant woman she is served with two platefuls of rice because she is, or rather she represents, "two souls"

[2] The procedure to be followed in the former event and the reason underlying it have already been described in Chapter 8; see p. 91 above.

St Culthaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42
[The Santal Christian Community]

little more than a translation of the familiar words of "Abide with me":

794
533
[539]

The sun has set, O Jesus stay with me,
I have no other friends but Thee.

Life does not stand, and swiftly it is gone,
On earth I nothing find but Thee alone.

Nor hardship nor trouble nor death shall I fear
If Thou grantest mercy and stayest near.

Thy Cross I hold, forgive my sins I pray,
Give heavenly light, be with me night and day.[1]

Whether the coming of Jesus is thought of as the shining of a bright star in the sky of a dark night or as the light that heralds the approach of dawn and a glorious day, in all circumstances the devotion of the Santal Christian Church is centred in Him as the Light of the world.

794
796

The festivals of the Christian year are becoming landmarks in the lives of the people. This is particularly true of the Christmas season. The communal feast when all the Christians eat together on Christmas Day is a natural expression of the spirit that animates the day. Various activities are arranged for the children. The type of celebration followed in the area has been created by the tradition established over a number of years in the central mission station. A Christmas tree is erected in the church and a party held there for the children on Christmas Eve. Originally, the gifts on the tree came from England, but for several years they have been found largely by the local community. Father Christmas is now a familiar figure. The young men of the church remain awake all night and set out soon after midnight to sing carols outside the homes of the members of the community, leaving off when they have completed the round soon after daybreak. A large proportion of full members attend a service of Holy Communion in the morning, but the main body of worshippers gather in large numbers for a service beginning soon after noon. All are dressed in new clothes, and the body of the church, which is bare of furnishings except for sitting-mats, is well filled for a service in which singing predominates. At the close of the service the youths begin a dance in the church, and going out through a side door they dance round the building. On

[1] See Appendix B, No. 30.

St Culshaw M-8 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

this occasion they make use of *sarpa*, and the Christmas songs that they sing are set to *Sohrae* tunes, as Christmas falls into the harvest season. During the afternoon of Christmas Day sports are held. These attract large numbers of spectators, and the final item in the sports, an archery contest, has become established as one of the events of the countryside. The interest and enthusiasm of spectators and competitors, who gather year after year to display their skill, is out of all proportion to the value of the prize that is offered. When the sports end the people disperse, the Christians to feast in their own homes.

Good Friday is observed with great solemnity, and the majority of the adults fast until after they have attended church. The services are very well attended, and on the initiative of the people themselves new forms of celebration are frequently being introduced. In most of the local churches the three-hour service has established itself in the customs of the people. On Good Friday in 1946 at the village of Barikul the people decided to follow the service by a silent procession through the village street. They filed behind a "standard bearer" who carried a rude cross fashioned from two *sarjom* saplings. At Easter it is customary for the dawn to be greeted by bands of young men singing in the village and also at the local Christian burial ground. The day is also characterized by large and enthusiastic gatherings of worshippers. Little has been done in this area to "baptize" the magico-religious practices connected with agriculture, and although Harvest Festivals are celebrated by the bringing of thank-offerings to church and the decoration of the church buildings, they have not become times of community rejoicing and remembrance as have the historic occasions associated with the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of the Saviour.

In the customs that surround life's crises one sees the blending of old and new concepts and symbols. Pregnancy taboos are widely observed, and steps have to be taken by Christians to remove the uncleanness resulting from birth. The practice of "churching" women was not introduced to the people at the beginning and it has never been put in the forefront, but the Christians carry out the bathing and naming and the feasting of neighbours. In this they are joined in many cases by non-Christian villagers, though no two Christian occasions are alike in this respect. In some places most of the villagers gather, in other places all the women come, while at other villages only Christians collect. Something depends on the strength and persistence